NATION

SC asks Himachal to give 137 cusecs of water to Delhi

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

Markets up again on easing political worries

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

Chhetri's last dance witnesses a goalless draw

≫ Page: 8 ≪

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Modi, Shah responsible for ₹30L cr market crash scam: RaGa

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah were "directly involved" in what he described as the "biggest stock market scam" in which retail investors lost Rs 30 lakh crore, and demanded a joint parliamentary committee probe into it.

Addressing a press conference here, he alleged that besides Modi and Shah, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had also commented on the stock markets ahead of elections, which has never happened in the past.

He said stock markets rose after "fake" exit polls and then crashed the day votes for the Lok Sabha polls were counted on 4 June with retail investors losing their investments.

He alleged that people higher up in BJP carried out this stock market scam.

He also posed a set of three questions, asking, "Why did Modi and Shah give specific investment advice to the five crore families investing in the stock markets? Is it their job to give investment advice to the people?".

"Why both interviews were given to the same media house owned by the same business group, which is also under SEBI investigations for manipulating stock markets," he also asked, alleging that the interviews given by the prime minister and home minister were to the same channel owned by a big business house.

"What is the connection between the BJP, the fake exit pollsters, and the dubious foreign investors, who invested one day before the exit polls were announced and made huge profits, at the cost of five crore families?" Gandhi asked.

He claimed that for the first time we noted that during polls, Modi, Shah, Finance Minister Sitharaman commented on the stock market.

He claimed "BJP leaders had information that exit polls were wrong."

Asked whether he was linking Adani group, Gandhi said this is a broader issue than the Adani issue.

Congress on Thursday asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi whether he would fulfil his promise of giving special category status to the states of Andhra Pradesh and Bihar.

Congress also slammed BJP after statues of Mahatma Gandhi, BR Ambedkar and Chhatrapati Shivaji among others were removed from their original place within the parliament premises and shifted to a lawn near the old building as part of a landscaping exercise,.

All the statues, including those of tribal leader Birsa Munda and Maharana Pratap, are now at the same place.

—PTI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi addresses a press conference in New Delhi on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

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EC presents Prez with list of new LS MPs

The meeting with President is part of the process for the formation of the 18th Lok Sabha

President Droupadi Murmu receives the list of elected MPs from the CEC Rajiv Kumar and Election Commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu in New Delhi on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar along with two election commissioners on Thursday presented details of newly elected Lok Sabha members to President Droupadi Murmu at the Rashtrapati Bhavan here.

The meeting is part of the process for the formation of the next or the 18th Lok Sabha.

Rajiv, accompanied by Election Commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu, met the President at 4.30 pm.

Murmu congratulated the CEC and EC on the successful completion of the electoral process, the largest democratic exercise in human history, the statement said.

Murmu also commended hundreds of millions of voters, who participated in the election process in such large numbers, the statement said.

The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) won a majority in the recently concluded general elections.

While the NDA is comfortably above the majority mark of 272 by winning 293 seats in the 543-member Lok Sabha, the BJP, which won 240 seats, has fallen short of the magic number for the first time since 2014. INDIA bloc has won 234 seats. Meanwhile, EC said a voter turnout of 65.79 per cent was recorded in the Lok Sabha elections, but the final figures may change as it does not include postal ballots

—PTI

China protest Modi's response to Taiwan Prez's praise on his poll victory

BEIJING, 6 JUNE

China on Thursday protested to India over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's social media statement that he looked forward to having closer ties with Taiwan, insisting that New Delhi should resist Taiwan authorities' "political calculations."

China views Taiwan as a rebel province that must be reunified with the mainland, even by force.

Modi's remarks came in response to a congratulatory message from Taiwan President Lai Ching-te on his election victory.

Lai, elected as Taiwan's President last month, in a message posted on X said: "My sincere congratulations to Prime Minister @narendramodi on his election victory.

"We look forward to enhancing the fast-growing #Taiwan-#India partnership, expanding our collaboration on trade, technology & other sectors to contribute to peace & prosperity in the #IndoPacific," Lai said. In his reply posted on X, Modi said: "Thank you @ChingteLai for your warm message. I look forward to closer ties as we work towards mutually beneficial economic and technological partnership".

Reacting to the messages, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said China has lodged a protest with India on this. "On this question, China opposes all forms of official interactions between Taiwan authorities and countries having diplomatic relations with China," she said.

There is but one China in the world and Taiwan is an inalienable part of the territory of the People's Republic of China, she said.

—PTI

PHOTO: PTI

Water levels drop nationwide, South hit hardest

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

The monitoring data from 150 main reservoirs revealed a total live storage of 39.765 billion cubic meters (BCM), which constitutes just 22 per cent of the total live storage capacity of these reservoirs, according to official data. Last week, the total capacity was 23 per cent of the storage capacity of these reservoirs. As the temperature rose, a week-on-week decline has been seen in the reservoir level for the past three months. The southern region continues to be hit hard at just 13 per cent capacity. The region, including Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu, has 42 reservoirs with a total capacity of 53.334 BCM. The current storage is alarmingly low at 7.114 BCM (13 per cent), significantly down from last year's 23 per cent and the ten-year average of 19 per cent.

—PTI

Hopeful, numbers are `encouraging': Sule on INDIA forming govt in future

NCP (SP) leader Supriya Sule on Thursday said the INDIA bloc has decided to `wait and watch' as the BJP is set to form the next government, but there is always hope as the Opposition alliance's tally of seats in the new Lok Sabha is "encouraging". Sule, who defeated her sister-in-law to win the Baramati Lok Sabha constituency for the fourth time, was speaking to reporters as she visited the city for the first time after the poll victory.

TDP, 2nd largest party in NDA, to join Central govt

Amaravati, 6 June

Telugu Desam Party, the second largest constituent in the BJP-led NDA with 16 MPs and one that has emerged as 'kingmaker' in the bloc's government formation at the Centre, is likely to join the union cabinet, a party spokesperson said on Thursday. Further, TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu will be sworn-in as as chief minister of Andhra Pradesh on 12 June, the party leader said.

The TDP leader further said this is not the first time that the party has been in government with the NDA at the centre.

—PTI

JD(U) may demand 3 Union Cabinet berths

PATNA, 6 JUNE

JD(U) is likely to demand "up to three" cabinet berths in the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre, a senior leader of the Nitish Kumar-led party said on Thursday.

With 12 MPs, the JD(U) is the second biggest BJP ally after the Telugu Desam Party's 16 in the NDA. The backing of allies like the JD(U) and TDP is crucial for the BJP to form the government at the Centre, as the saffron party could not reach the majority mark on its own in the Lok Sabha elections.

"We are now eyeing up to three cabinet berths...," the JD(U) leader said.

Another top party leader said he was hopeful of a "respectable" representation in the Union Council of Ministers.

JD(U) sticks to its demand for Special Category Status for Bihar

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's JD(U), which the BJP relies on heavily since losing majority in the Lok Sabha, has reiterated its demand for special category status (SCS) for the state.

Granting SCS to Bihar has been a long-pending demand of the JD(U) supremo. Bihar cabinet, headed by Kumar, had even passed a resolution last year requesting the Centre to grant SCS to the state.

The Centre had previously said it would not entertain demands for "special category status" from any state, in view of the 14th Finance Commission's recommendation. *—PTI*

B'DESH, NEPAL PMs TO ATTEND MODI'S SWEARING-IN

DHAKA/ KATHMANDU, 6 JUNE

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to leave Dhaka for New Delhi on Friday to join the swearing-in ceremony of Narendra Modi as India's Prime Minister for a third consecutive term, her aide said on Thursday.

Hasina was among the first foreign leaders to congratulate the Prime Minister, reflecting the warmth and personal rapport between the two leaders. Prime Minister Pushpakamal Dahal 'Prachanda' will attend the swearing-in ceremony of Prime Minister Narendra Modi likely to be held over the weekend in New Delhi.

—PTI

NIA arrests key accused in Manipur violence conspiracy

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Thursday arrested a key accused from Imphal airport in a case relating to a transnational conspiracy by insurgents and terrorist outfits to exacerbate violence in Manipur and spread terror in the northeastern state. Thongminthang Haokip alias Thangboi Haokip alias Roger, a member of Kuki National Front-Military Council (KNF-MC), has been arrested under various sections of Indian Penal Code and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act in a case registered suo motu by the NIA on 19 July last year, the NIA said in a statement. The accused was found to have been involved in attacks on security forces at various places. *—PTI*

Nagendra quits over money transfer scam

BENGALURU, 6 JUNE

Minister B Nagendra submits resignation to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in Bengaluru on Thursday **PHOTO: SALAR NEWS**

Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Tribal Welfare B Nagendra resigned on Thursday after facing allegations in connection with an illegal money transfer case involving a State-run corporation.

The illegal money transfer, involving Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation Ltd, came to light, after its accounts superintendent, Chandrashekhar P, died by suicide on 26 May, leaving behind a death note. The note revealed unauthorised transfers of Rs 187 crore, including Rs 88.62 crore to various accounts, some linked to prominent IT companies and a Hyderabad-based cooperative bank. The note implicated the corporation's suspended Managing Director JG Padmanabh, Accounts Officer Parashuram G Durugannavar, and Union Bank of India Chief Manager Suchismita Rawal, and mentioned that a "Minister" had given oral orders for the transfers.

Nagendra said on Thursday: "For the past 10 days, some BJP leaders have been trying to hamper the State government's image. So, without causing any trouble to the government, which is working for the people, I have decided to resign."

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said he would decide on Nagendra's resignation after consulting Special Investigation Team (SIT) and senior Cabinet colleagues. Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said, "The Home Minister and I had a discussion with Nagendra. He is not involved in the scam and hence, there is no need to resign. However, he has offered to resign to uphold the dignity of the party and the government."

Nagendra said his resignation was voluntary and not due to pressure from the Chief Minister or the Deputy Chief Minister. He said SIT would find complications in the investigation and this prompted him to step down.

SIT, led by Manish Kharbikar, Additional Director General of Police, Economic Offences, at Criminal Investigation Department, is conducting the probe. Union Bank of India also filed a formal complaint with CBI regarding the embezzlement and suspended three officials. Home Minister G Parameshwara indicated that the Cabinet would consider handing over the investigation to the CBI once a formal request is received from the central agency. *—Salar News*

CISF official slaps Kangana for 'disrespecting farmers'

CHANDIGARH/NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

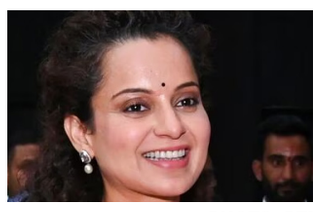


PHOTO: PTI

Newly elected BJP MP from Himachal Pradesh's Mandi Kangana Ranaut was allegedly slapped by a Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) constable at the Chandigarh airport Thursday because she "disrespected farmers"

An inquiry committee has been set up by the CISF to look into the matter. The constable has been suspended, according to sources in the CISF.

The constable, who appeared to be upset with Ranaut over her stance on the farmer protests, has been suspended and a first Information Report (FIR) lodged against her, officials said. The Central Industrial Security Force, tasked with providing security at airports, has also ordered a court of inquiry into the incident. In a video statement titled "Shocking rise in terror and violence in Punjab" posted on X after she landed in Delhi said she was safe and fine.

Ranaut said she had been getting a lot of calls from the media and her well-wishers. The constable, she said, came towards her from the side. "She hit me in the face and started abusing me. I asked her why she did it and she said she supports the farmer protests. I am safe but my concern is that terrorism is increasing in Punjab... How do we handle that?" she said. *—PTI*

Woman murdered over loan dispute in Ramanagara

RAMANAGARA, 6 JUNE

In an incident in Chokasandra village of Kanakapura taluk, a woman was murdered and buried in a garden after being called to discuss the return of a loan. The accused has fled the scene, and police are actively searching for him. The primary suspect in the murder is identified as Ravi from Chokkasandra village. When Sunandamma did not return home on Tuesday evening, her son reported her missing to the Kanakapura police station. Two years ago, Sunandamma had lent Rs 20,000 to Ravi. During the inquiry, it was revealed that on Tuesday, Ravi allegedly called her under the pretense of returning the money. Based on this lead, the police inspected Ravi's house and discovered Sunandamma's body buried in his garden. It is suspected that during this meeting, Ravi murdered her to avoid repaying the loan. She was a resident of T Gollahalli village in the same taluk. —*PTI*

Siddalingaswamy, BSY's personal assistant, dies

MYSURU, 6 JUNE

KP Siddalingaswamy, the close personal assistant to senior BJP leader and former Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa, passed away on Wednesday night at a private hospital due to illness. The 56-year-old Siddalingaswamy had been undergoing treatment at a private hospital in the City for the past few days. Just a few days ago, Yediyurappa and his son BY Vijayendra had visited the hospital. Siddalingaswamy also contested against Siddaramaiah as a KJP candidate from Varuna constituency in 2013, although he was unsuccessful. During the previous BJP government's tenure, he was the President of Tourism Development Corporation.
—*Salar News*

Car crashes into bike; 2 killed on spot, 3 injured

BENGALURU, 6 JUNE

Two people were killed and three more injured in a collision between a motorcycle and a car on the Hoskote-Chintamani State Highway. The deceased are Mohammad Faiz, an 18-year-old from Shivajinagar, and Jagdish, a 30-year-old resident of Kannurhalli, who lost their lives on the spot. Reportedly the incident occurred as the car attempting to escape, collided with the bike. Abbas, Habbas Pasha, and Abuzar sustained injuries and were taken to the City hospital in Hoskote. The driver of the car, Pragatish Rao, reportedly drove recklessly and was allegedly driving under the influence of alcohol. This outcry culminated in a demonstration near the Hoskote Mortuary by Jagadish's relatives. They urged for the proper justice.
—*Salar News*

Family donates organs of couple in Mandya

MANDYA, 6 JUNE

The husband of the woman who died in a road accident between Keragodu-Maralinganadoddi in the taluk on Wednesday also passed away at a Bengaluru hospital. C Manju, 46 and his wife HS Sunila, 40, from Chikkabanasawadi near Keragodu have tragically lost their lives. The couple was on their way to the Keragodu village temple on a bike when a car hit them from behind near Maralinganadoddi. Sunila died instantly at the scene, while Manju, who sustained serious injuries, was initially admitted to Mandya District Hospital for first aid and later transferred to BGS Apollo Hospital in Bengaluru for further treatment. Despite the pain of death, the family has found solace by donating organs of Manju and Sunila. A case has been registered at Keragodu Police Station.
—*Salar News*

All 11 candidates for MLC polls elected unopposed

CM's son Yathindra, ex-BJP general secy CT Ravi get elected

BENGALURU, 6 JUNE

All 11 candidates, including Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's son Yathindra Siddaramaiah and former BJP national general secretary CT Ravi, were on Thursday declared elected unopposed to Karnataka Legislative Council, a poll official said.

The biennial elections to 11 seats in Upper House to be elected by Members of Legislative Assembly was scheduled to be held on 13 June. Thursday was the last day for the withdrawal of candidature.

As per the existing strength of parties in the Assembly, Congress was in a position to win seven seats, BJP three and JD(S) one. "No candidate withdrew their nomination till 3pm on Thursday (the last day to withdraw). There were 11 candidates in the fray to fill 11 vacancies, so all of them are declared elected unopposed," election officer to this poll and Karnataka Legislative Assembly Secretary MK Vishalakshi said.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's son Yathindra Siddaramaiah ***PHOTO: SALAR***

The other elected candidates are: ruling Congress' Balkhees Banu, Minor Irrigation Minister NS Boseraju, CM's political adviser K Govindraj, KPCC Working President Vasanth Kumar, former MLC Ivan D'Souza and party's Kalaburagi district president Jagdev Guttedar.

Opposition Chief Whip in Council N Ravi Kumar, and party leader MG Mule were declared elected from BJP, as also JD(S)' TN Javarayi Gowda, who lost the Assembly elections last year from Yeshwantpur segment. Boseraju, who is also currently the Leader of the House in the Council, Govindraj, and Ravi Kumar were re-elected.

Besides the 11 candidates, Congress' RM Asif Pasha had also filed a nomination.

- The other elected candidates are: ruling Congress' Balkhees Banu, Minor Irrigation Minister NS Boseraju, CM's political adviser K Govindraj, KPCC Working President Vasanth Kumar, former MLC Ivan D'Souza and party's Kalaburagi district president Jagdev Guttedar. Opposition Chief Whip in Council N Ravi Kumar, and party leader MG Mule were declared elected from BJP

However, his candidacy was rejected during the scrutiny on Tuesday, as his nomination did not have proposers. The election was necessitated as the term of 11 MLCs — six from BJP, four from Congress and one from JD(S) — will end on 17 June.

—*Salar News/PTI*

State to get rain for next five days, forecasts IMD

BENGALURU, 6 JUNE

India Meteorological Department (IMD) has announced that the monsoon has arrived in most of Karnataka and parts of Maharashtra, Telangana, and coastal Andhra Pradesh. The department predicts widespread light to moderate rainfall with thunderstorms and gusty winds across the state for the next five days.

Places in the Krishna basin in Karnataka were likely to receive moderate to isolated heavy rainfall till 13 June, according to Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre.

It forecast scattered to fairly widespread light to moderate rains as well as isolated heavy rains till 13 June.

It has also said due to heavy rains forecast over places in the upper Krishna basin from 8 to 11 June, there would be a likely increase in the inflows into the Krishna basin.

Meanwhile, in the Cauvery basin, till 11 June, scattered to fairly widespread light to moderate rains are likely, KSNDMC said.

According to data from KSNDMC telemetric rain gauge locations across the state, widespread rains were reported in Bengaluru Urban and Kolar on 5 June and the maximum rainfall is recorded at Sangareshkoppa in Saundatti taluk, Belagavi district with 107.5 mm.

Incidentally, Malnad and coastal regions registered a significant deficit in rainfall of -20 per cent to -59 per cent.

Thunderstorms with lightning are likely to occur at isolated places over Bengaluru (urban and rural), Ballari, Chamarajanagar, Dakshina Kannada, Kalaburagi, Kolar, Mandya, Mysuru, Raichur, Tumakuru, Udupi and Yadgir today, according to India Meteorological Department, Bengaluru.

Heatwave conditions are likely to persist in some eastern parts, Uttar Pradesh, and north Madhya Pradesh for the next five days.

Residents across India are advised to stay informed about the latest weather updates and follow necessary precautions as the monsoon progresses.

—*PTI*

UTTARAKHAND TREKKING ACCIDENT

13 survivors reach back Bengaluru safely

BENGALURU, 6 JUNE

Thirteen survivors from a group of 22 trekkers from Bengaluru who were stranded in the Himalayan region of Uttarakhand due to extreme weather have returned home on Thursday evening. The mortal remains of nine trekkers, who died during a 35-km trek from Uttarkashi, are expected to arrive in Bengaluru early on Friday morning from Delhi via flight.

Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda said on X, "We have shifted all 9 bodies from the airport to the hospital for embalming. After embalming, the bodies will be transported in ambulances to Delhi airport. We are booking space for Friday morning Delhi-Bengaluru flights. As the flights are booked, we will intimate arrival details for the deceased persons."

Rescue operations were initially halted on Wednesday night due to adverse weather, resulting in five confirmed deaths and 13 rescues, with four trekkers still unaccounted for. Operations resumed early on Thursday, recovering four additional mortal remains of trekkers, which were sent to Dehradun. Vijayendra J, Master Trainer at Uttarakhand NDRF, told Salar News, "We have sent the mortal remains of nine people to Uttarkashi. Thirteen have been rescued by helicopter and sent to Dehradun for medical treatment and are reported to be safe."

The trekkers with Revenue Minister Minister Krishna Byre Gowda in Bengaluru on Thursday evening ***PHOTO: SALAR***

The 22-member trekking team, organised by Himalayan View Trekking Agency, Maneri, began their journey on 29 May for the trek from Uttarkashi. The team, consisting of 18 trekkers from Karnataka, one from Maharashtra, and three local guides, was expected to return by 7 June but lost their way due to a blizzard as they approached Sahastra Tal from the last base camp. They were trekking in the Sahastratal alpine lake area, situated at an altitude of 4,100-4,400 metres in the upper Himalayan region of Uttarakhand.

Four helicopters, including three from Air Force (two of which are Cheetah helicopters), were mobilised for the rescue operations. The rescue team departed from Silla Village, Budhakedar in Tehri district, ITBP Matli, and a backup team from Nehru Institute of Mountaineering, Uttarkashi. Separate teams conducted rescues both by helicopter and on foot from Pinswad of Ghansali to assist the trekkers.

The Indian Air Force reported, "The survivors of the mishap have been airlifted to the nearest medical centre for further care and recuperation. The rescue operation, which commenced yesterday (on Wednesday), has now culminated."

Revenue Minister Gowda said: "As soon as we learned of the situation, the Uttarakhand government, Mountaineering Federation of India, and the Home Department of the Central Government were contacted through the district administration. With their help, the rescue operation was carried out," he said.

—*Salar News*

This 75-yr-old woman was scaling peaks for 35 years

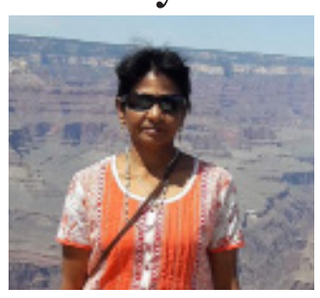
MEGHANA PRASAD
BENGALURU, 6 JUNE

A 71-year-old woman was among a group of people from Bengaluru who died during Sahastra Tal trek in Uttarakhand after being caught in a blizzard on Monday.

Asha Sudhakar, who retired from SBI as deputy manager with a service of 32 years, has been into mountaineering for 35 years. The resident of MCECHS Layout near Baiyappanahalli has visited the Himalayas 38 times, where she engaged in climbing expeditions, trekking adventures, and mountaineering and skiing courses. Hailing from Thuckalay in Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu, Asha trekked hills across Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Goa.

Asha's passing has left a deep void among her loved ones. She is survived by her husband, Sriramulu Sudhakar, and son, Himajith Sudhakar, who currently is married and settled in the US.

Friends and relatives who visited the family's residence here on Thursday described her as a compassionate and kind individual. "She was a bright and cheerful lady. Her presence at the workplace cheered all of us. She was kind and compassionate to every person even if they are from a lower strata of society," a former colleague and friend of Asha, who did not wish to be named, told Salar News.



Asha Sudhakar has visited Himalayas 38 times. ***PHOTO: SALAR***

"Asha was known for her adventurous spirit. She never used to sit tight at home. She has been to many treks before as well. She was so excited to go on this trip, but fate had other plans for her. May her soul rest in peace," her friend added.

Their tenant, Sakshi (name changed), also expressed her sorrow. "I just moved in here a year ago and they were so warm and kind to me, especially Asha. I have a 10-month-old child who is loved by them as though he is their grandson. It will be hard for me or my son not to see her again," she said.

Her husband, who is en route to Dehradun, said once the formalities are done, they will bring back the bodies of all the trekkers to Bengaluru and hand them over to the respective family members. "I will do the final rites for my wife in the presence of my son and daughter-in-law," he told

—*Salar News*

City court extends Prajwal's SIT custody till 10 June

BENGALURU, 6 JUNE

A court here on Thursday extended till 10 June Special Investigation Team (SIT) custody of former JD(S) MP Prajwal Revanna, who is facing charges of rape and sexual abuse against several women.

He was produced before the special court for elected Representatives which had on 31 May remanded him to SIT custody till 6 June.

The 33-year-old grandson of JD(S) patriarch and former prime minister HD Deve Gowda had failed in his bid to retain the Hassan Lok Sabha seat in the recent polls.

The extension of custody was granted on Thursday, with the court acknowledging the need for further investigation. The SIT sought additional time to gather more evidence and interrogate the accused comprehensively.

SIT officials arrested Revanna soon after he landed at Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport from Germany on 31 May.

He had left for Germany on 27 April, a day after Hassan went to the polls. A 'Blue Corner Notice' seeking information on his whereabouts had earlier been issued by the Interpol, following a request by the SIT via the Central Bureau of Investigation.

A Special Court for Elected Representatives issued an arrest warrant against Revanna on May 18, following an application moved by the SIT. —*PTI*

BETTER HEALTHCARE

Conduct health camps regularly: CM to officials

BENGALURU, 6 JUNE

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday stressed that physical and mental activity is essential as inactive people are more prone to get sick and instructed officials to organise more health check-up camps on a regular basis across the State.

He said that he also practises pranayama and does physical exercises regularly.

Speaking after inaugurating a free health check-up and treatment camp organised for officers and staff of the secretariat at Vidhana Soudha, he said, "People who sit without physical activity are more prone to get sick. So physical and mental activity is necessary."

Noting that lifestyles and food habits are adversely affecting human health, Chief Minister said the State government is constantly designing and implementing programmes to ensure all sections of people have access to necessary healthcare and treatment.

Chief Minister said that the hard-working lifestyle of our ancestors had kept them healthy and strong.

He instructed officials that such health check-up camps should be organised on a regular basis and it should be conducted all over the State.

- Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday stressed that physical and mental activity is essential as inactive people are more prone to get sick and instructed officials to organise more health check-up camps on a regular basis across the State.

Siddaramaiah gave a call to start caring for good health from an early age to avoid the health problems that come with old age and shared that he quit smoking.

"Addictions can happen with peer pressure also. But we must always be vigilant and protect ourselves. I used to smoke cigarettes earlier. Once friends bought a pack of foreign cigarettes. I smoked more (cigarettes) in a short period of time. I was convinced to quit smoking one day and the same day, I stopped smoking completely," he added. —*PTI*

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah at a health check-up camp organised for the staff of Vidhana Soudha on Thursday. ***PHOTO: SALAR***

Rahul to appear in City Court today in defamation case

BENGALURU, 6 JUNE

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi will appear before a special court here at 10:30am on Friday in connection with a defamation case filed by the Karnataka BJP for issuing allegedly defamatory advertisements in mainstream newspapers.

The advertisement ahead of the Assembly polls last year had accused the then BJP government in the State of indulging in large-scale corruption during its 2019-2023 rule.

After the court appearance, he will hold a discussion with the Congress's newly-elected MPs from the State as well as the defeated candidates at Bharat Jodo Bhavan on Queens Road at 11.30am, the party's State unit said, adding that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister and KPCC President DK Shivakumar will also be present. The court had on June 1 granted bail to Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar after they appeared before it in connection with the case.

During the hearing last week, the counsel for Gandhi moved an application seeking exemption from appearance for his client, which was opposed by the complainant's side, arguing that repeated exemptions should not be permitted.

—*PTI*

BJP protests over Valmiki Corp scam

BJP workers protest at Vidhana Soudha on Friday. ***PHOTO: SALAR***

BENGALURU, 6 JUNE

The State unit of BJP organised a protest march titled 'Raj Bhavan Chalo' here on Thursday demanding the dismissal of Tribal Welfare Minister B Nagendra and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah over alleged misappropriation of funds belonging to Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation. BJP accused the Congress government of engaging in money-laundering activities involving public funds.

The protest, led by State President BY Vijayendra and Leader of Opposition R Ashoka, started from Vidhana Soudha and ended at the Governor's residence. All BJP MLAs and MLCs participated in the march.

A delegation of BJP leaders met Governor Thawar Chand Gehlot and submitted a memorandum demanding the resignations of both Siddaramaiah and Nagendra. The memorandum accused the Congress-led State government of fostering corruption and illegal money-laundering since taking office in May-June 2023. It highlighted a major scandal involving Rs 87 crore and additional funds intended for the welfare of tribal people and scheduled tribes in Karnataka were allegedly misappropriated by political figures within the government.

Vijayendra said funds meant for the development of Dalit community were diverted for Congress's Lok Sabha election campaign. Vijayendra also called for the case to be handed over to CBI. —*Salar News*

PHOTO: PTI

Delhi court seeks NIA's response on Rashid's bail plea

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

A Delhi court on Thursday directed the NIA to respond by tomorrow to an application filed by Engineer Rashid, arrested in a 2016 Jammu and Kashmir terror funding case, seeking interim bail to take oath as an MP after the recently concluded general elections. Former J&K MLA Sheikh Abdul Rashid, popularly known as Engineer Rashid, defeated former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. He moved the court seeking interim bail, or custody parole in the alternative, to take oath and perform his parliamentary functions. The application was moved before Additional Sessions Judge Chander Jit Singh on 4 June, and had directed the NIA to file its response by today. The agency sought time to file the reply. *—PTI*

Cong convenes CWC meet on 8 June to discuss poll result

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

Congress has convened a meeting of its working committee on 8 June to discuss Lok Sabha poll result. Votes of the election were counted on 4 June. The meeting has been convened by Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and he will chair it. The meeting will be held at 11 am at the Congress headquarters on Saturday. Congress has emerged as the second largest party in the election and improved its tally to 99, from 52 in 2019 poll. It will be after a gap of 10 years that the grand old party will have the Leader of Opposition's position in Lok Sabha, a post it failed to get as its tally was below the requisite 10 per cent of total seats in the House both in 2014 and 2019. Congress leaders, including Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, besides others leaders would participate in the deliberations. *—PTI*

BJP did politics in the name of Lord Ram: Faizabad MP

LUCKNOW, 6 JUNE

Newly elected Samajwadi Party MP from Faizabad Awadhesh Prasad on Thursday attacked BJP, saying this party is not the "real" follower of Lord Ram, and accused it of doing politics in his name and cheating the people. Prasad defeated his nearest rival from the BJP, Lallu Singh, by 54,567 votes in Uttar Pradesh's Faizabad parliamentary seat, where a grand Ram temple was built in Ayodhya on the orders of the Supreme Court and Prime Minister Narendra Modi had led its consecration ceremony on 22 January. "The BJP did politics in the name of Ayodhya. They have worked against the dignity of Maryada Purushottam Ram," Prasad told.*—PTI*

Visa 'scam': Delhi court grants bail to Karti Chidambaram

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

A Delhi court on Thursday granted bail to Congress leader Karti Chidambaram in a money laundering case linked to the alleged Chinese visa scam. Special Judge for Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Central Bureau of Investigation, Kaveri Baweja, granted the relief to the accused after he appeared before the court in pursuance to summons issued against him. The court had issued summons against the accused while taking cognisance of a charge sheet filed by the ED in the case. The judge granted the relief on a personal bond of Rs one lakh and one surety of like amount. The ED has registered the money laundering case against Chidambaram in the alleged scam pertaining to the issuance of visa to 263 Chinese nationals in 2011 when his father P Chidambaram was the Union home minister. *—PTI*

TIKAIT ASKS GOVT TO KEEP SPACE FOR DIALOGUE OPEN

He said govt didn't talk to farmers for over 3 years

NOIDA, 6 JUNE

Rakesh Tikait said the last government did not talk to farmers after 22 January, 2021 *PHOTO: PTI*

Bharatiya Kisan Union leader Rakesh Tikait has said whoever forms the new government at the Centre, they should keep space for dialogue with farmers open.

Tikait's remarks came as the BJP-led NDA is set to form the next government.

"'Andolan' (protest) arises when there are problems in the country. We want that whoever forms the government, they should keep space for talks open," Tikait, who is BKU Spokesperson, told reporters in Muzaffarnagar on Wednesday.

The BKU is part of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM), an umbrella body of farmer unions which had led the 2020-21 protest against the Narendra Modi government, leading to withdrawal of three contentious agri-marketing laws.

Now, several farmer unions have been demanding a legal guarantee of minimum support price (MSP) for crops.

Tikait said the last government did not talk to farmers after 22 January, 2021.

"There have been no talks (with farmer groups) in 2022 and 2023, and now it is 2024," he added.

On BJP falling short of a majority in the Lok Sabha on its own, Tikait claimed, "We had already told you that BJP leaders were defeating their candidates (in UP)...they wanted that their party should come to power but their MPs should lose so they would get the ticket in future. This was everyone's planning."

The influential farmer leader took a swipe at several BJP ministers, including Sanjeev Balyan who contested from Muzaffarnagar and Ajay Mishra 'Teni' (Kheri seat). Both the BJP leaders lost the Lok Sabha polls.

"Victory and loss are part and parcel of elections. There was trouble in the whole country, and the public punishes but without saying anything. The public works silently," Tikait said.

Asked if he saw Modi becoming the Prime Minister for a third time in a row, Tikait said he was not an astrologer to make such a prediction.

On Bihar Chief Minister and Janata Dal (United) chief Nitish Kumar's key role in central government formation, Tikait said, "Nitish Kumar will go wherever he gets benefit. It is not a crime to rob the 'robbers'. He will also negotiate his deal well."

In Uttar Pradesh, the BJP's seats were reduced to 33 this time from 62 in 2019 and 71 in 2014 out of the total 80 Lok Sabha seats in the state. *—PTI*

Narendra Modi *PHOTO: PTI*

NDA MPs may meet today to elect Modi as their leader

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

Newly elected MPs ofthe BJP-led National Democratic Alliance are expected to meet on Friday to elect Narendra Modi as their leader, paving the way for him to take oath as prime minister for a third term.

Sources said after Modi's election as the leader of NDA MPs, senior members of the alliance like TDP's N Chandrababu Naidu and JD(U)'s Nitish Kumar will join the prime minister for a meeting with President Droupadi Murmu to present her the list of parliamentarians supporting him.

He may be sworn in over the weekend, possibly Sunday, they added. The NDA has 293 MPs, comfortably above the majority mark of 272 in the 543-member Lok Sabha.

Senior BJP leaders, including Union ministers Amit Shah and Rajnath Singh, held deliberations through the day on Thursday as the party set in motion government formation efforts.

They met at BJP president JP Nadda's residence in what was seen as part of the party's exercise to reach out to allies over issues like their share of ministerial berths and pick the probables from within their party for the coalition government. *—PTI*

BJP IN SOUP

JD(U) wants Agniveer scheme to be reviewed

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

KC Tyagi *PHOTO: PTI*

- Support of allies like the JD(U) is crucial for BJP as it could not reach thVe majority mark on its own in Lok Sabha election. BJP bagged 240 seats, 32 short of an absolute majority

BJP ally Janata Dal (United) leader KC Tyagi on Thursday said his party has demanded for a review of the Agnipath scheme and will "pursue" the caste census issue which, he asserted was a need of the time.

Tyagi said his party's support to BJP was "unconditional".

"There is anger among voters on the (short-term army recruitment) Agniveer scheme. Our party wants those shortcomings to be removed, on which people have objections," Tyagi told reporters here.

He said the JD(U) is not opposed to the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) but all stakeholders should be consulted on it.

"On the UCC, the chief minister (Nitish Kumar) had written to the Law Commission. We are not against the UCC. But there should be consultation with all the stakeholders, chief ministers, political parties and different sects, and a resolution should be found," he said. Asked if his party will push for a caste census, Tyagi said, "No party in the country has denied a caste census. Bihar has shown the way, the prime minister also did not oppose... It is the demand of the time, and we will pursue it."

On its support to BJP as a member of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), he said, "There is no pre-condition, there is unconditional support. But it is in our mind and heart that Bihar should be given special status. After bifurcation, the situation Bihar has faced, it can not be corrected without granting it special status."

Support of allies like the JD(U) is crucial for BJP as it could not reach thVe majority mark on its own in the Lok Sabha election. BJP bagged 240 seats, 32 short of an absolute majority. Among its allies, N Chandrababu Naidu's Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Nitish Kumar's JD(U), which won 16 and 12 seats in Andhra Pradesh and Bihar, respectively, and other alliance partners, the NDA has 293 seats. *—PTI*

The judge extended Kejriwal's judicial custody till 19 June *PHOTO: ANI*

'Kejri not suffering from life-threatening ailment'

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

- In yet another setback to Kejriwal, the court on Wednesday dismissed his application for interim bail on medical grounds in the money laundering case linked to the alleged excise policy scam

The extensive campaigning tours and related events undertaken by Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal indicate that he does not appear to be suffering from any serious or "life threatening" ailment, a Delhi court has held while denying him interim bail.

In yet another setback to Kejriwal, the court on Wednesday dismissed his application for interim bail on medical grounds in the money laundering case linked to the alleged excise policy scam.

"The extensive campaigning tours and related meetings/events undertaken by Arvind Kejriwal as highlighted during the course of arguments indicate that he does not appear to be suffering from any serious or 'life threatening' ailment so as to entitle him to the benefit," Special Judge Kaveri Baweja said.

The judge also extended Kejriwal's judicial custody till 19 June.

In the order, the judge further held that grant of interim bail for conducting tests in order to determine if high ketone levels or the stated weight loss could have caused Diabetic Ketoacidosis "stands on an even weaker footing than a medical ground".

The judge, however, directed the Tihar jail authorities to take care of his medical needs in judicial custody.

During the hearing on Saturday, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) had opposed the application, saying he campaigned throughout the Lok Sabha elections but "now when he has to surrender, he suddenly claims to be ill". *—PTI*

46% of newly elected MPs face criminal cases: ADR report

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

There has been a 55 per cent increase in the number of MPs with declared criminal cases since 2009 *PHOTO: ANI*

As many as 251 (46 per cent) of the 543 newly elected Lok Sabha members have criminal cases registered against them and 27 of them have been convicted, according to an analysis by poll rights body Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR).

This is the highest number of candidates facing criminal charges to be elected to Lower House. A total of 233 MPs (43 per cent) had declared criminal cases against themselves, 185 (34 per cent) in 2014, 162 (30 per cent) in 2009 and 125 (23 per cent) in 2004.

According to the analysis, there has been a 55 per cent increase in the number of MPs with declared criminal cases since 2009.

Of the 251 winning candidates this year, 170 (31 per cent) face serious criminal cases, including rape, murder, attempt to murder, kidnapping, and crimes against women. This is also an increase from 159 (29 per cent) MPs in 2019, 112 (21 per cent) MPs in 2014, and 76 (14 per cent) MPs in 2009, the analysis showed.

There has been a 124 per cent increase in the number of MPs with declared serious criminal cases since 2009, it said. The analysis also highlights specific cases among the winning candidates.

While 27 winning candidates have declared they have been convicted in criminal cases, four declared cases related to murder under Section 302 of IPC, and 27 declared cases related to attempt to murder under Section 307 of IPC.

15 winning candidates have declared cases related to crimes against women, including two facing charges of rape under IPC Section 376. *—PTI*

TN ex-CM's call for unity junked by AIADMK

CHENNAI, 6 JUNE

Former chief minister and ousted AIADMK leader O Panneerselvam on Thursday renewed his call to AIADMK factions to reunite to strengthen the party, even as AIADMK rejected his call saying he was only creating confusion.

Following his defeat in the Lok Sabha election from Ramanathapuram and with the AIADMK piloted by former chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami failing to secure even a single seat out of 39 constituencies in the state, Panneerselvam sought for the retrieval of the AIADMK "by preparing to make sacrifices."

He has been making such an appeal since the party's reins went into the hands of Palaniswami.

AIADMK leader and former state Minister KP Munusamy, however, dismissed the appeal as nothing but an attempt to create confusion."Panneerselvam has no right to talk about the party's unity. He joined hands with the BJP to freeze the Two Leaves symbol of the AIADMK," Munusamy told reporters responding to Panneerselvam's appeal.

"It is easy to break a stick but difficult to break sticks in a bundle. This is a call to retrieve the AIADMK founded by late chief minister M G Ramachandran and nurtured by late chief minister J Jayalalithaa, for unity. Consoling cadres and making them get accustomed to defeat is a sin," he said. *—PTI*

Cal HC expresses concern over post-poll violence

KOLKATA, 6 JUNE

Expressing concern over alleged post-poll violence in certain areas of West Bengal following the conclusion of Lok Sabha elections, the Calcutta High Court on Thursday issued a directive allowing affected people to submit complaints to the state's Director General of Police (DGP) via email and if the complaint indicated a cognizable offence, the DGP would forward it to the relevant local police station for FIR registration. The order came following a petition in the High Court seeking direction to police to ensure protection to Opposition party workers. Stating that similar allegations had come up after the 2021 Assembly elections, the court asked whether incidents of post-poll violence happened in any other state. Expressing dismay at reports of post-poll violence following the general elections, the court emphasised the state's responsibility to prevent recurrence of such incidents.

Meawhile, BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari urged West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose to visit those areas in the state from where "post-poll violence" has been reported and to ensure that no innocent lives are lost. *—PTI*

Samrat Chaudhary *PHOTO: FB*

BJP blames DMK as goat slayed with Annamalai's pic

CHENNAI, 6 JUNE

Screengrab of the video just before the goat was slayed *PHOTO: X /@NARAYANANTBJP*

BJP's Tamil Nadu unit on Thursday responded strongly and demanded action after a video went viral in which some men are seen slaying a goat, around whose neck a photo of the party's state President K Annamalai is tied. It was immediately not known where the purported incident happened or who had posted it. The veracity of the clip could not be ascertained immediately.

Tamil Nadu BJP Vice-President and Party Spokesperson Narayanan Thirupathy uploaded the video on his social media platform X, condemning it.

"Further, it can be heard on the video that small children were made to shout slogans against @annamalaik," Thirupathy added.

In Lok Sabha polls, the ruling DMK-led bloc won all 39 seats in the state as well as the lone neighbouring Puducherry segment. Annamalai, who led the BJP-led alliance lost out to DMK's Ganapathy P Rajkumar in Coimbatore. *—PTI*

FIRST EVER LS SEAT

BJP's win in Thrissur mark a shift: Analysts

T'PURAM, 6 JUNE

PHOTO: PTI

BJP's sterling performance in Kerala, winning from Thrissur and increasing its vote share in many constituencies in 2024 Lok Sabha polls, garnering nearly 20 per cent vote share in many constituencies they contested in, clearly indicates a shift in the political landscape of the southern state, say noted political analysts.

Besides actor-politician Suresh Gopi winning from Thrissur, BJP-led NDA saw its vote share rise from over 15 per cent in 2019 to nearly 20 per cent now.

Analysts indicate that Kerala's political landscape is evolving from a traditionally bipolar contest dominated by Congress-led UDF and CPI(M)-led LDF to a tripolar scenario. This shift, which has been gradually happening since the 2011 Assembly elections, is now becoming more evident.

In Thrissur, BJP won with 37.8 per cent of the total votes. In Thiruvananthapuram, BJP finished second, securing 35.52 per cent of the votes. In Alappuzha, another stronghold of CPI(M) and Congress, BJP candidate garnered 28.3 per cent of the votes.

Analysts say there has been a shift in the preferences of minority Christians, traditional Congress supporters, and OBCs, who were once the committed vote-bank of the Left in Kerala, as they no longer consider the BJP a necessary evil.

> **Please do not confine me to a room. As an MP I can do the work of various ministries. I do not want to be a minister. There can be new revolutionary working platforms. All I want is that when I go with a project for the people of Kerala with determination, the ministries concerned should implement it.**
>
> -Suresh Gopi, Actor-cum-politician

The shift of minority Christian votes in constituencies like Thrissur and Thiruvananthapuram was very evident. "The Christian community in Kerala has a majority of upper caste Christians. It is easier for them to align with the BJP as Hindu elements are now incorporated into Christian rituals," said Dr G Gopakumar, former Vice-Chancellor of Central University.

He noted that technically, Hindus are a minority in Kerala if the number of Dalit Christians is included in the minority community. According to current records, Kerala has 46 per cent minorities. According to Dr Prabhash J, former Pro-Vice Chancellor of Kerala University, Muslim appeasement by the Left also contributed to Hindu voters shifting their loyalty to the BJP. Gopakumar believes BJP propaganda among Christians, highlighting issues like 'love jihad', created concern within the Christian community in Kerala. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Prisoner stabbed inside Tihar jail in gang fight

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

A prisoner was stabbed in a fight that broke out inside the Tihar Jail allegedly between members of rival gangs, police on Thursday said. The injured, Hitesh, a murder case undertrial, was rushed to Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital, where he is under treatment, they said. The fight had allegedly broken out around 11.15am on Wednesday between Hitesh, a member of Gogi gang, and two others from Tillu Tajpuriya gang, an officer said. "The names of people who attacked Hitesh have come as Gaurav Lohra and Gurinder. "Based on the nature of injuries, a case under Section 307 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) has been registered and the investigation is being conducted," the DCP added. *—PTI*

Three die while saving cow fallen in well in MP

SATNA, 6 JUNE

Three people died and two others were hospitalised in Satna district of Madhya Pradesh after they inhaled suspected poisonous gas that emanated from a well, which they entered to rescue a cow, a police official said on Thursday. The incident took place in Umri village on Wednesday night, he said."A group of villagers noticed that a cow has fallen into a well accidentally, following which three of them climbed down with ropes to save the animal," Nagoud police station in-charge Ashok Pandey said. One of them, who managed to come out, fell unconscious. After that, the villagers alerted the police, he said. A police team reached the spot and with their help, some local residents entered the well by covering their faces with wet cloths to rescue those trapped inside, Pandey said. The deceased have been identified as Ashok Singh,45, Ramratan,22, and Vishnu,24. *—PTI*

Bihar gangster shot dead in encounter with UP STF

NOIDA, 6 JUNE

A Bihar-based gangster carrying a reward of Rs 2.25 lakh was shot dead in Uttar Pradesh's Muzaffarnagar district following an encounter with the police, an officer said.The action was carried out Wednesday night by a joint team of the Special Task Forces (STFs) of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in Ratanpuri area of Muzaffarnagar, the officer said. Nilesh Rai, who hailed from Begusarai district in Bihar, had 16 cases registered against him including those of murder, loot, and extortion, Additional Direction General of Police (UP STF and Law and Order) Amitabh Yash said."Today, in a joint operation of UP STF's Noida Unit and Bihar STF, there was an encounter with criminals in Ratanpuri police station area of Muzaffarnagar," Yash said. *—PTI*

Supertech Chaiman gets bail in money laundering case

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

A Delhi court on Thursday granted bail to Supertech chairman and promoter RK Arora in a money laundering case. Additional Sessions Judge Devender Kumar Jangala granted relief to Arora, noting that there was no likelihood of him evading the trial or influencing the investigation. Arora was arrested in June last year. As many as 26 FIRs were registered by the Economic Offences Wing (EOW), Delhi Police, Haryana Police and Uttar Pradesh Police against Supertech Limited and its group companies, and Arora, for criminal conspiracy, cheating at least 670 home buyers for an amount of Rs 164 crore. *—PTI*

SC asks Himachal to give 137 cusecs of water to Delhi

SC told the states that there should be no politics over water

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

The acute shortage of drinking water has become an "existential problem" in Delhi, the Supreme Court observed on Thursday and directed the Himachal Pradesh government to release 137 cusecs of surplus water to the national capital on Friday and Haryana to facilitate its flow.

The apex court also said there should be no politics over water.

A vacation bench of Justices PK Mishra and KV Viswanathan noted that the Himachal Pradesh government is willing to release 137 cusecs of surplus water available with it for Delhi.

AAP leader Atishi In a post on X, Atishi said, "I salute the Hon'ble Supreme Court for standing with the people of Delhi during this unprecedented water crisis. This is a time that calls for coordinated effort above all else, and the SC order marks a victory for the people of Delhi and their right to water."

"Since Himachal Pradesh has no objection and is ready and willing to release the surplus water available with it, we direct that Himachal Pradesh shall release 137 cusecs of surplus water available with it from the upstream so that the water reaches Hathnikund barrage and reaches Delhi through Wazirabad," the bench said.

Considering the urgency in the matter, the bench directed Himachal Pradesh to release the water on 7June with prior intimation to Haryana. It said the Upper Yamuna River Board (UYRB) shall measure the excess water which comes to Hathnikund for its onward supply to Wazirabad and Delhi.

"As and when the surplus water is released with prior information to Haryana by the state of Himachal Pradesh, the state of Haryana shall facilitate the flow of surplus water so released by Himachal Pradesh to Hathnikund and to Wazirabad so that it reaches Delhi uninterruptedly and is made available for the citizens of Delhi for drinking water," the bench ordered.

"A status report be submitted before this court on Monday (10 June)," it said.

It also asked the Delhi government to ensure water received for the parched national capital is not wasted.

The apex court said the Delhi government and the respondents, including Haryana and Himachal Pradesh, shall file their compliance affidavits by Monday. *—PTI*

- The Upper Yamuna River Board (UYRB) shall measure the excess water which comes to Hathnikund for its onward supply to Wazirabad and Delhi

Residents fill water from a tanker amid water crisis at the Vivekanand Camp, Chanakyapuri area, in New Delhi on Thursday PHOTO: PTI

'CATASTROPHIC EFFECT'

Monetary aid to victim can't be used to reduce term: SC

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

If payment of compensation becomes a consideration for reducing a sentence, it will have a "catastrophic" effect on the criminal justice administration, the Supreme Court has said.

The object of payment of compensation to the victim in a criminal case, it said, is to rehabilitate those who have suffered loss or injury by the offence and it cannot be a ground to reduce the sentence imposed upon the accused.

The court said it will result in criminals with a purse full of money to buy their way out of justice, defeating the very purpose of criminal proceedings. A bench of Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said the idea of compensation is based on the theory of victimology which recognises the harsh reality that victims are unfortunately the forgotten people in the criminal justice delivery system."Payment of victim compensation cannot be a consideration or a ground for reducing the sentence imposed upon the accused as victim compensation is not a punitive measure and only restitutory in nature and thus, has no bearing with the sentence that has been passed which is punitive in nature," the bench said.The top court said Section 357 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) is intended to reassure the victim that they are not forgotten in the criminal justice system.

It is a constructive approach to crimes based on the premise that mere punishment of the offender may not give solace to a victim or their family, it said. The observation came while hearing a plea filed by a man named Rajendra Umraniya challenging an order of the Gujarat High Court which reduced five years sentence imposed upon two men to four years jail in a criminal case. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

RUINS FROM HISTORY

Conservation work underway to protect an ancient Murugan temple that was discovered through excavations, near Mamallapuram, on Thursday PHOTO: PTI

Khalistan slogans in Punjab on Op Bluestar anniversary

AMRITSAR, 6 JUNE

Pro-Khalistan slogans were raised by supporters and activists of radical Sikh outfits here on the 40th anniversary of Operation Bluestar on Thursday.

The slogans were raised by activists of various outfits, including the Simranjit Singh Mann-led Shiromani Akali Dal (Amritsar), and former MP Dhian Singh Mand at the Akal Takht – the highest temporal seat of Sikhs. Mann, who recently lost the Lok Sabha poll from the Sangrur seat, was also present.

Led by the radical outfit Dal Khalsa, some Sikh youths were carrying Khalistani flags and photographs of a damaged Akal Takht – the highest temporal seat of Sikhs.Dal Khalsa activists were seen carrying placards bearing portraits of slain militant leader Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and Khalistani separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar, who was killed in Canada last year.The entire marbled periphery of the Golden Temple, the holiest Sikh shrine, near the Akal Takht echoed with pro-Khalistan slogans.Some Sikh youths carried banners and placards reading 'Khalistan Zindabad'.

Elaborate security arrangements were put in place in Amritsar to ensure that the event passed off peacefully.

In his message to the Sikh community, Akal Takht Jathedar Giani Raghbir Singh said two Sikhs who won the Lok Sabha elections as Independents should raise their voice in Parliament for the release of 'Bandhi Singhs' *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

'MUMBAI HOARDING THAT KILLED 17 HAD WEAK FOUNDATION'

MUMBAI, 6 JUNE

A hoarding that collapsed in Mumbai last month claiming 17 lives was installed on a weak foundation, as per a report submitted by a technological institute to police, officials said on Thursday.

While ideally any hoarding structure in the city should be able to withstand wind speeds of 158 kmph, the billboard that collapsed in Ghatkopar could withstand a wind speed of only 49 kmph, according to the report submitted on Wednesday.

On the day of the incident, the wind speed was 87 kmph, an official said.

The Veermata Jijabai Technological Institute (VJTI) on Wednesday submitted the report to the Mumbai crime branch, which is probing the hoarding collapse incident, a senior police official said. *—PTI*

Students demand NEET re-exam over marks inflation

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

Several aspirants of the medical entrance exam NEET have alleged inflation of marks which led to a record 67 candidates bagging the top rank, including six from the same exam centre in Haryana.

The National Testing Agency (NTA), however, denied any irregularities and said the changes made in the NCERT textbooks and grace marks for losing time at the examination centres are some of the reasons behind the students scoring higher marks.

"After the NEET exam, now the NEET result is also in controversy. After the NEET results were declared, questions are being raised on six students from the same centre getting 720 out of 720 marks. Apart from this, many other irregularities related to the NEET exam have also come to light," the Congress wrote on X.

"First due to paper leak and now due to result error, the future of lakhs of youth of the country is getting ruined. It is clear that this government cannot get any paper done without leaking it. Sir claims to stop wars in foreign countries but he is unable to even stop paper leaks in the country," the party added.

Detailing the reason behind inflation of marks, the NTA said it received representations raising concerns about the loss of time during conduct of the examination.

Six students from the same exam centre in Haryana got 720 out of 720 marks PHOTO: PTI

Kota NEET aspirant jumps to death, day after results

A day after the NEET-UG results were declared, an eighteen-year-old medical aspirant allegedly jumped from the ninth floor of a building here, police said on Thursday.

Bagisha Tiwari, who lived on the fifth floor of the multi-storey building with her mother and brother, allegedly committed suicide on Wednesday, they said.She was rushed to a private hospital but succumbed to her injuries an hour later, they added.

Tiwari, who hailed from Reva district in Madhya Pradesh, had been preparing for the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (UG) exam in a coaching institute in Kota, they said. *—PTI*

Rajkot fire: Why was civic head not expelled, asks HC

AHMEDABAD, 6 JUNE

The Gujarat High Court on Thursday came down heavily on the state government over the Rajkot game zone fire that killed 27 people last month, and sought to know why the then chief of the local civic body was not suspended for not taking action against the facility that was being run without permission.

The High Court expressed anger after learning that though a demolition notice was served to the TRP Game Zone, where the devastating fire took place on 25 May, by the Rajkot Municipal Corporation (RMC) in June last year, no action was taken for one year against the facility by the civic body, whose commissioner was Anand Patel at that time.

A special bench of Justices Biren Vaishnav and Devan Desai of the high court was hearing a suo motu PIL it had taken up on 26 May, a day after the fire accident at TRP Game Zone in Rajkot.

During a hearing held on Thursday, RMC's lawyer GH Virk, through an affidavit, informed the court that no periodic checks were carried out by the RMC's fire department at the TRP Game Zone and there was no compliance of the safety measures in accordance with the Fire Safety Act. It was also revealed during the hearing that the game zone owners never applied for any fire NOC and the facility was running without any police permission. *—PTI*

States, UTs told to set up heatstroke rooms

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

With many parts of the country in the grip of a heatwave, the Centre has asked states and Union territories to conduct follow-up reviews to ensure dedicated heat stroke rooms at all health facilities besides implementing critical fire and electrical safety measures.

Dr Atul Goel, Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), Union Health Ministry conducted a virtual review meeting with states and UTs to assess the preparedness for heatwave conditions and fire safety measures adopted by various healthcare facilities across the country.

State Health departments have been issued advisories and asked to implement guidelines on strengthening health systems preparedness for Heat-Related Illnesses (HRI) besides issuing a public health advisory with do's and don'ts.

PHOTO: PTI

They have been urged to follow the guidelines on emergency cooling for severe heat-related illnesses and autopsy findings in heat related deaths.State health departments have been asked to adhere to the joint communication from Secretary (Health), MoHFW and NDMA and a communication from Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) on health facility fire safety measures and checklist for assessment of health facility and ambulance preparedness to prevent impact of heat. *—PTI*

FIRST TIME IN 85 YEARS

Cooks, water carriers promoted in CRPF

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

A total of 2,600 cooks and water carriers, the lowest rung of constabulary that constitutes an essential backbone of the CRPF, have been promoted for the first time in the 85-year history of the country's largest paramilitary force.

The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has a total authorisation of 12,250 personnel for the two specialised cadres that handle the extensive network of kitchens, canteens and similar administrative works for the about 3.25 lakh men and women strength force raised in 1939.

On Wednesday through an order, 1,700 cooks and 900 water carrier personnel have been promoted from their constable designation to the next rank of head constable. This has happened for the first time in the 85-year history of the CRPF, a senior officer told PTI.

These personnel have been part of the force since its raising in 1939 in the British era. They were given specific cadre name of cook and water carrier in 2016 when the 7th pay commission recommendations were implemented by the Union government, the officer said.

A Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) officer said that these personnel, who were recruited in the lowest rung of hierarchy, could never be promoted and were made to retire in the same rank in which they were recruited even after serving for about 30-35 years on average.The cooks and water carrier personnel form an essential part of the running of any force as they keep the troops in combat fed and nourished, the CAPF officer said.Each CRPF battalion has about 45 such personnel.

The move came as a result of a proposal, prepared by the CRPF and later approved by the Union home ministry, to ensure that the aspirations of these personnel are taken care of and they are promoted like other cadre personnel, the first officer said.

Last year, a similar promotion was undertaken for personnel working as cook, water carrier, barber, washerman and sweeper in the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), another CAPF. *—PTI*

The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has a total authorisation of 12,250 personnel for the two specialised cadres PHOTO: PTI

DUST STORM

People cover themselves during a dust storm, in Patna. The residents had a slight respite from the scorching heat when dust storm hit the city on Thursday
PHOTO: PTI

Shock to NDA as Oppn bounces back

The results of Lok sabha elections announced on Tuesday are being interpreted in a rather unusual way. While the winners appear subdued, the runners-up are celebrating.

The NDA alliance, led by Prime Minister elect Narendra Modi, has won a historic third term in power, with more than 290 seats in the 543-member parliament.

But BJP on its own did not reach the magic figure of 272 seats needed to form the government – and Modi is now being seen as a much diminished leader.

The outcome is being seen as a huge comeback for the Opposition INDIA alliance and Congress party leader Rahul Gandhi, the face of the bloc.

The alliance has won just over 230 seats and doesn't have the numbers to cobble together a government – but more than 24 hours after counting of votes began, they were yet to concede.

"It's an extraordinary story," political analyst Rashid Kidwai said. "The result is surprising. The Opposition has managed to pull off the unexpected."

A jubilant Congress party called the verdict "a moral and political defeat for Modi", whose BJP had campaigned predominantly on his name and record. On Tuesday evening, Rahul told a press conference that "the country has unanimously sent a message to Modi and BJP leader Amit Shah that we do not want you".

Going into the election, the Opposition seemed in complete disarray and Congress-led INDIA bloc, made up of more than two dozen disparate regional parties, appeared to be on the verge of imploding. Experts questioned whether it was fit to challenge Modi, who looked unstoppable at the time.

And as the election neared, the Opposition faced an uphill battle. Parties and leaders were raided by government agencies; two Chief Ministers – including Arvind Kejriwal of Delhi – were jailed; and bank accounts belonging to Congress were frozen by the income-tax authorities.

LS POLLS 2024

The Opposition INDIA alliance won only 232 seats but the outcome is being seen as a huge comeback for INDIA bloc and Congress party
PHOTO: PTI

The credit for the Opposition's performance largely goes to Rahul, the much criticised scion of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty.

Kidwai says, "During his Bharat Jodo Yatra and the Nyay March through the length and breadth of the country, he met millions of people – which added to his stature and won him lots of support. It also gave him confidence and political heft."

But Rahul was still not perceived as a threat to Modi. Last year, a court in Gujarat convicted the Congress leader of defamation. He was thrown out of parliament and barred from contesting elections – until the Supreme Court suspended his conviction.

The perception that the BJP was seeking to go after the opposition, says political analyst and author Ajoy Bose, backfired.

The parties, he says, "were afraid they would be wiped off and many saw echoes of Emergency [a reference to the 1975 action of then-PM Indira Gandhi to suspend elections and curb civil rights] in the way the government was functioning".

As the results show, BJP juggernaut met strong resistance in several opposition-ruled states.

In Tamil Nadu, the ruling DMK party kept BJP out by winning all 39 seats in the state. In West Bengal, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee fought to limit the BJP to 12 seats. In Maharashtra, the BJP was limited to nine seats – it had won 23 of the 48 seats in 2019 and its then-ally Shiv Sena had bagged a further 18.

But the biggest upset for Modi and BJP, Bose says, came from the bellwether state of Uttar Pradesh.

"Akhilesh Yadav and his Samajwadi Party (SP) is the biggest success story of this election. A very clever alliance with Rahul Gandhi won them 43 of the state's 80 seats. BJP's tally has been restricted to a poor 33." Modi's party won 62 seats in 2019 and took 71 in 2014.

BJP had banked on the Ram Mandir temple to be their trump card, with Modi presiding over the opening of the unfinished temple in Ayodhya with much fanfare in January. But in the Faizabad constituency, where it is located, the BJP candidate lost.

People were unhappy about a lack of jobs and high food and fuel prices, he said. Many were also angry with the changes in how army soldiers are recruited.

"With Congress and SP fighting the election together as part of INDIA alliance, all anti-BJP voters came together to vote for us," he added.

Now that NDA – and Modi – are back in power, INDIA needs to institutionalise its alliance and Rahul, "the chief architect of the alliance", must lead from the front, Kidwai adds. "It's unlikely that the government will stop going after the Opposition. But it also can't be business as usual for the government. They cannot continue with their politics of vendetta; it will have to be toned do.

—BBC News

LETTERS write to us at salar@salar.news

SALAR ساڈھ

Hajj pilgrims brace for heat during holy journey

Millions face heat stroke risk as Hajj coincides with Mecca's hottest month. Elderly pilgrims and those with chronic illnesses are most vulnerable.

Millions of Muslims are set to perform the Hajj pilgrimage this month but scorching temperatures in Mecca are fuelling concerns about a surge in heat-related illnesses among pilgrims.

Hajj welcomes over two million Muslims from around the world. This year, the annual pilgrimage is expected to occur for six days between 14 June and 19 June.

Temperatures in Mecca at this time of the year can reach above 50 degrees Celsius. These extreme conditions pose a significant health risk for pilgrims, especially older adults and those with underlying health issues.

Last year, more than 2,000 pilgrims suffered heat stress during the Hajj pilgrimage. Pilgrims face a heightened risk of heat stroke with a potential fivefold increase from global temperatures rising by 1.5 degrees Celsius compared to pre-industrial times.

The Saudi Arabian government is exploring new strategies to mitigate extreme heat by using advanced rain enhancement techniques such as cloud seeding to create a more comfortable environment for the pilgrims. Other steps to mitigate the effects of heat include providing free water, misting stations, and well-equipped healthcare facilities. Educational campaigns will encourage pilgrims to wear light clothing, stay hydrated, and limit daytime activities.

The high cost of Hajj, which requires years of savings, contributes to a demographic skew towards older participants. Elderly pilgrims often face additional challenges due to limited access to comfortable and conducive accommodation.

These older pilgrims and those with chronic illnesses like diabetes and heart disease visiting the holy sites for Hajj rituals are at increased risk of suffering from heat-related ailments. Additionally, they also tend to carry heavy objects, go out at noon, and visit the Masjid al-Haram several times a day, all of which may expose them to health hazards arising from the heat and humidity of Mecca.

Exposure to excessive heat is associated with a range of illnesses that may be as mild as heat cramps, oedema, prickly heat, and fainting to serious conditions such as heat exhaustion or heat stroke.

The long distances travelled, carrying heavy items, with limited access to cool spaces exacerbate the risks.

When the body temperature goes beyond 40 degrees Celsius, rapid cellular damage takes place and this can lead to serious organ damage that can end in death.

In mass gatherings, heat-related illnesses are often of primary public health concern due to the risk of many infectious and non-infectious diseases, and even stampedes and road accidents.

Hot weather and large crowds during Hajj can lead to more cases of diarrhoea, food poisoning, respiratory tract infections, and skin problems from sweating.

The ability of human beings to dissipate heat from the body resides mainly in the effective cardiovascular system. However, many chronic medical problems increase the adverse effects of heat stress, and prominent among these are diabetes and malnutrition. Having a chronic illness makes it harder to cope with the extreme heat during Hajj. A study among Saudi pilgrims found that 18.4 per cent reported chronic health conditions. Among these conditions, diabetes was the most prevalent (55.7 per cent), followed by hypertension (60.7 per cent), other cardiac diseases (7.5 per cent), and bronchial asthma (11.5 per cent).

Pilgrims from developing nations, typically with lower or middle levels of education, may face challenges in mitigating heat-related health risks. Those with higher education are more likely to understand health warnings and implement preventative measures to minimise the risks.

Here are steps pilgrims can take to mitigate heat stroke risk:

Pre-departure training and monitoring: Pre-Hajj health education campaigns can equip pilgrims with knowledge about heat stroke prevention. The Hajj and health authorities of each country should inform and educate pilgrims about the precautions to deal with exposure to excessive heat during Hajj. The health authority that accompanies each group of pilgrims should give more attention to older people and those with existing comorbidities. Drinking plenty of water throughout the day is crucial.Wearing loose, lightweight, and breathable clothing helps with perspiration.

Also, staying out of direct sunlight and umbrellas can shield pilgrims from the harsh UV rays.

—PTI

Hot weather and large crowds during Hajj can lead to more cases of diarrhoea, food poisoning, respiratory tract infections, and skin problems from sweating
PHOTO: PTI

Migrants are rattled, unsure as deportations begin under new rule

Abigail Castillo was about to cross the US border illegally when she heard President Joe Biden was halting asylum. She continued anyway, walking hours through the mountains east of San Diego with her toddler son, hoping it wasn't too late.

"I heard that they were going to do it or were about to do it," Castillo, 35, said Wednesday as she and her son were escorted to a Border Patrol van with about two dozen others from Brazil, Ecuador and her village in the southern Mexican state of Oaxaca, which she said she left because it was gripped by violence.

They had missed the deadline, and were now subject to the new deportation rule.

Her sense of uncertainty prevailed among many migrants after Biden invoked presidential powers to stop asylum processing when arrests for illegal crossings top 2,500 in a day. The measure took effect at 12.01 am on Wednesday because that threshold was met.

Two senior Homeland Security Department officials confirmed the first deportations under the new rule took place Wednesday, though they did not say how many were deported. The officials briefed reporters on condition their names not be used in keeping with regulations.

Sergio Franco, who clutched his baby girl after a nearly two-month journey from Ecuador with his family, walking through the perilous Darien jungle on the border between Colombia and Panama, said he was confident that he would prevail in his plea to find a safe haven in the United States.

"If we have evidence, there shouldn't be a problem," he said as he got into the van with Castillo and the others.

As the group was driven away, several migrants from India walked up to the same dusty area near a gun shop in the town of Dulzura, one of several that have popped up over the last year in the remote rural outskirts of San Diego for migrants to surrender to Border Patrol agents. There was no water or restrooms and little shade.

Several Guatemalan women arrived later. Among them was Arelis Alonzo Lopez, who said she was nearly five months pregnant and had walked for two nights. A Border Patrol agent asked how she felt.

"I can't take any more," she answered.

Asylum remains suspended until average daily arrests fall below 1,500 for a week straight. The last month that crossings were that low for that long was in July 2020, during the depths of the COVID-19 pandemic.

IN US

Migrants seeking asylum rest afer crossing the border in San Diego, California
PHOTO: PTI

Migrants who express fear for their safety if they are deported will be screened by US asylum officers but under a higher standard than what's currently in place. If they pass, they can remain to pursue other forms of humanitarian protection, including those laid out in the UN Convention Against Torture.

There are serious questions about whether the new measure can stop large-scale migrant entries. Mexico has agreed to take back migrants who are not Mexican, but only limited numbers and nationalities. And the Biden administration doesn't have the money and diplomatic support it needs to deport migrants long distances, including to Ecuador and India.

- There are questions about whether the new measure can stop large-scale migrant entries. Mexico has agreed to take back migrants who are not Mexican, but only limited numbers and nationalities

In Matamoros, Mexico, across the border from Brownsville, Texas, Esmeralda Castro of El Salvador worried the asylum halt will drive more people to compete for the 1,450 slots awarded daily to enter legally through US Customs and Border Protection's heavily oversubscribed online app, known as CBP One. Castro, 40, said she has tried for nine months for an appointment using the app.

"Imagine what's going to happen with what they've done. The system is going to collapse again," said Castro, speaking at a migrant camp near the banks of the Rio Grande where she has been living with about 10 others. The app has become so overwhelmed at times that users got error messages and experienced other technical failures.

Juan Daniel Medina of the Dominican Republic said he was determined to stick with CBP One, even after eight months of fruitless attempts to get an appointment.

"It's the correct way because that way you do everything legally. They won't have to jump the river and risk facing criminal charges," the 30-year-old Medina said.

Two hours before the sun set Tuesday in San Diego, four busloads of migrants were dropped off by Border Patrol agents at a transit centre, many of them to seek asylum in one of 68 immigration courts across the country. Asylum-seekers can generally work while their claims slowly wind through overwhelmed immigration courts.

Jesus Gomez of Medellin, Colombia, said Border Patrol agents told him he was one of the last people to be released to seek asylum and that he should tell friends and family back home that they will be deported if they attempt to enter illegally. He said he didn't know if it was true.

"It's a very difficult thing to navigate," Gomez, 49, said as he waited for his wife to be released by the Border Patrol before they fly to Boston, where their daughter lives.

—PTI

PHOTO: X/ @JAKESULLIVAN46

Biden's NSA to visit Delhi to talk ties with new govt: US

WASHINGTON, 6 JUNE

US President Joe Biden's National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan will visit India to engage with Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led new government on shared priorities, including the trusted, strategic technology partnership, the White House said, as the two top leaders seek to deepen the bilateral partnership. Sullivan's visit was discussed during the phone call President Joe Biden made to Prime Minister Modi on Wednesday to congratulate him on his re-election for a historic third term. Sullivan's travel dates to India have not been announced yet but is expected to be within days of Modi being sworn in for the third time on Saturday. Modi is all set to take charge as the prime minister for a third consecutive term with the Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) winning 293 seats in the Lok Sabha polls. *—PTI*

4 killed, 27 injured after trains collide in Czech Republic

PRAGUE, 6 JUNE

A passenger train collided head-on with a freight train in the Czech Republic, killing at least four people and injuring 27 others, officials said on Thursday. Interior Minister Vít Rakusan said the crash took place late Wednesday night in the city of Pardubice, about 100 kilometres east of Prague. The high-speed passenger train belonged to the private RegioJet company. Rakusan said none of the injured was in life-threatening condition. Rescuers said 380 passengers were on board the train heading for the city of Kosice in eastern Slovakia and further to Chop across the border in Ukraine. At least two Ukrainian women died in the crash, Ukraine's Foreign Ministry said. *—AP*

3 killed, 12 injured as bus catches fire in Pakistan

KARACHI, 6 JUNE

At least three persons were killed and 12 others injured early Thursday morning when a bus caught fire after colliding with a motorcycle in Pakistan's Balochistan province, officials said. Lasbela Senior Superintendent of Police captain (rtd) Naveed Alam said the bus was heading from Quetta to Karachi when the accident occurred in Lasbela's Uthal tehsil, Dawn newspaper reported. A motorcyclist carrying petrol reportedly collided with the bus, causing the fire. Police and rescue officials rushed to the site of the incident upon receiving the alert and immediately began rescue efforts, Alam said. The motorcyclist died on the spot, while two other charred bodies were found in the bus, SSP Alam said. *—PTI*

Tornadoes touch down across US, killing toddler

LIVONIA, 6 JUNE

A tornado killed a 2-year-old boy and injured his mother Wednesday when a tree fell on their house in suburban Detroit, while emergency workers in Maryland were responding to reports of collapsed structures with people trapped inside after a tornado there. Officials in Livonia, Michigan, said in a post on the city's website that the quick-developing tornado struck several neighborhoods in the city on Wednesday afternoon. A massive tree was uprooted and fell onto the family's house and through the roof, landing on a bed where the woman and her 2-year-old were sleeping, officials said. Crews worked for nearly an hour to remove the roof and parts of the tree and then lift the tree to get the victims out. *—AP*

Myanmar army kills 50 villagers, feeds detainees urine

NAYPYIDAW, 6 JUNE

At least 50 people were killed by Myanmar soldiers in a raid on a village in Rakhine State last week, say local residents and opposition forces.

More than 100 soldiers are believed to have raided the village Byai Phyu, which is just outside the state capital of Sittwe, on Wednesday.

Sittwe, a city with around 200,000 inhabitants, a large port and airport, is one of the Burmese army's few remaining strongholds. But the insurgents are close, and enjoy the sympathy of much of the ethnic Rakhine population.

They were looking for supporters of the Arakan Army (AA), which has become one of the most effective ethnic fighting forces in Myanmar.

Eyewitnesses told BBC the village was subjected to two-and-half days of terror as soldiers blindfolded and beat them up, poured burning petrol on their skin and forced some of them to drink their urine.

Men who had tattoos showing support for the AA were singled out for especially harsh treatment, locals said. One eyewitness said the soldiers cut out the tattooed skin, poured petrol onto it and set it alight.

Eyewitnesses told BBC the villagers were blindfolded and beat them up *PHOTO: THE INDEPENDENT*

51 people aged between 15 and 70 were "violently tortured and killed", the National Unity Government (NUG), representing the ousted civilian government, said in a statement. The AA estimated the death toll to be more than 70 people.

The ruling military council, or junta, has denied the accusations, which would amount to one of the worst atrocities committed in the three year-old Myanmar civil war. "They asked the men if the AA was in this village," one woman told BBC. "Whatever answer they gave, whether they said AA was there or it wasn't, or they didn't know, the soldiers hit them." In just six months, the AA has swept through most of Rakhine State, forcing the military to keep retreating. It ended a ceasefire with the army last year and joined ethnic insurgents in other parts of the country in a combined operation aimed at overthrowing the junta which seized power in February 2021.

The names of witnesses are not being used to protect them. They told the BBC that everyone in the village, which has just over 1,000 households, were kept out in the open for two days, under the sun, with little to eat or drink, while dozens of men were tied, blindfolded and some taken away in trucks for further interrogation. Many are yet to return.

—BBC News

Israeli strike kills at least 33 people in Gaza school

The health ministry at least 23 women and 14 children died

Palestinians look at the destruction after an Israeli airstrike in Khan Younis, Gaza Strip *PHOTO: AP/PTI*

DEIR AL-BALAH, 6 JUNE

An Israeli strike early Thursday on a school sheltering displaced Palestinians in central Gaza killed at least 30 people, including 23 women and children, according to local health officials.

The Israeli military said that Hamas militants were operating from within the school. It was the latest instance of mass casualties among Palestinians trying to find refuge as Israel expands its offensives in the Gaza Strip. A day earlier, the military announced a new ground and air assault in central Gaza, pursuing Hamas militants it says have regrouped there.

Troops repeatedly have swept back into sections of the Gaza Strip they have previously invaded, underscoring the resilience of the militant group despite Israel's nearly eight-month onslaught in the territory. Witnesses and hospital officials said the predawn strike hit the al-Sardi School, run by the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees known by the acronym UNRWA. The school was filled with Palestinians who had fled Israeli offensives and bombardment in northern Gaza, they said.

Ayman Rashed, a man displaced from Gaza City who was sheltering at the school, said the missiles hit classrooms on the second and third floor where families were sheltering. He said he helped carry out five dead, including an old man and two children, one with his head shattered open. "It was dark, with no electricity, and we struggled to get out victims," Rashed said. *—AP*

Spain applies to join S Africa's case at UN court

MADRID, 6 JUNE

Spain will ask a United Nations court for permission to join South Africa's case accusing Israel of genocide in Gaza, its foreign minister announced on Thursday. Spain is the first European country to take the step after South Africa filed its case with the International Court of Justice late last year. *—PTI*

Houthis unveil solid-fuel 'Palestine' missile

DUBAI, 6 JUNE

Yemen's Houthi rebels have unveiled a new, solid-fuel missile in their arsenal that resembles aspects of one earlier displayed by Iran that Tehran described as flying at hypersonic speeds.

The rebels fired its new "Palestine" missile, complete with a warhead painted like a Palestinian keffiyeh checkered scarf, at the southern Gulf of Aqaba port of Eilat in Israel on Monday. The attack set off air raid sirens but caused no reported damage or injuries.

Footage released by the Houthis late Wednesday showed the Palestine being raised on what appeared to be a mobile launcher and rising quickly into the air with plumes of white smoke coming from its engine. White smoke is common with solid-fuel missiles.

Solid-fuel missiles can be set up and fired faster than those containing liquid fuel. *—AP*

LEADERS ARE NOT INTERESTED TO END CONFLICT: UN

UNITED NATIONS, 6 JUNE

Leaders in many conflict areas are more interested in power and political rivalries than in listening to the needs of their people, improving their lives and ending the fighting, the United Nations humanitarian chief told AP.

In an interview on Wednesday, Martin Griffiths said humanitarian workers in conflict-torn countries see the consequences of this failure every day when they often put their lives on the line to help millions of people who are hungry, displaced and caught in violence. That has been brought into sharp relief in Gaza, where over 200 relief workers have been killed.

The eight-month-old Israel-Hamas war in Gaza does remind the world of the willingness of some key nations to engage to try to end conflict, said Griffiths, who is preparing to step down this month after three years as undersecretary-general for humanitarian affairs and emergency relief coordinator.

"There's no lack of political diplomacy on Gaza," he said. "It's just not working well enough. But the efforts that have been made by a whole range of governments to support the Palestinian people tells us it can be done."

The United Nations has criticized Israeli forces for hindering aid deliveries and has called for all border crossings to be open and the security of aid workers and convoys that have been overtaken by starving Palestinians. Israel has repeatedly blamed the UN for not getting enough aid into Gaza. *—AP*

Netherlands kicks off 4-day EU polls across 27 nations

THE HAGUE, 6 JUNE

Polls opened in the Netherlands on Thursday to kick off four days of voting in European Union parliamentary elections across the 27 member states that are expected to deliver gains for the hard right.

Estonians can cast their ballots across six days that started on Monday, but the Netherlands is the only EU country to start its single-day vote so early, followed by Ireland on Friday and the rest of the EU nations over the weekend. Europe-wide results will be announced on Sunday after all member states have completed voting.

- Dutch voting comes six months after Geert Wilders' Far-Right Party for Freedom sent shockwaves around Europe by becoming the biggest party in Dutch parliament

The Dutch voting comes six months after Geert Wilders' Far-Right Party for Freedom sent shockwaves around Europe by becoming the biggest party in the Dutch national parliament.

Polling suggests Wilders will build on that popularity and set the tone for much of the bloc.

Since the last EU elections five years ago, populist, Far-Right and extremist parties are leading governments in three EU nations, are part of governing coalitions in several others, and appear to have surging public support across the continent.

The EU elections are the world's second-biggest exercise in democracy behind the election in India, and the stakes are high.

Almost 400 million voters will be electing 720 members of the European Parliament from beyond the Arctic Circle to the edges of Africa and Asia.

They will have an impact on issues ranging from global climate policies and defence to migration and geopolitical relations with China and the United States. *—PTI*

At least 100 killed in Sudan as RSF attack local village

CAIRO, 6 JUNE

At least 100 people were killed, and dozens were injured after the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces attacked a village in Gezira province in Sudan on Wednesday, officials said.

Women, children, and elderly were among the victims in the attacks by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on Wad al-Noura village in Gezira, Mini Arko Minawi, the governor of Darfur province, said on X.

A grassroots group set up to protect residents in Wad Madani, the capital city of Gezira, said late Wednesday on social media that the paramilitary force, which has been fighting the Sudanese army for over a year, used heavy artillery to besiege and attack the village. The Madani Resistance Committee, which has been threatened and attacked by the RSF in the past, accused the paramilitaries of looting Wad al-Noura in the midst of the attacks, which, it said started Wednesday morning.

The RSF claimed in December that it had seized control of Wad Madani, about 100 kilometers (60 miles) southeast of the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, and a haven for hundreds of thousands of people displaced by fighting.

The resistance committee said the RSF invaded the village, displacing residents, including women and children, to other parts of the district of al-Manaqil.

The Sudanese transitional government in a statement on its Telegram channel condemned the attacks and called for the international community to hold the RSF accountable. *—AP*

'NUCLEAR WAR'

Putin threatens to provide weapons to attack West

MOSCOW, 6 JUNE

Vladimir Putin *PHOTO: AP/PTI*

Russian President Vladimir Putin has warned that Moscow could arm countries with a view to attacking Western targets.

Putin made the statement while criticising the West's delivery of long-range weapons to Ukraine. Several countries including the United States have given Ukraine the green light to strike targets inside Russia.

Such action could lead to "very serious problems", Putin told foreign reporters. "If someone thinks it is possible to supply such weapons to a war zone to attack our territory and create problems for us, why don't we have the right to supply weapons of the same class to regions of the world where there will be strikes on sensitive facilities of those countries?" the Russian president said.

"That is, the response can be asymmetric. We will think about it." He did not specify which countries Moscow could supply weapons to. Putin singled out Germany, which recently told Ukraine it was free to hit targets inside Russia with long-range German-made weapons.

"When they say that there will be more missiles which will hit targets on Russian territory, this definitively destroys Russian-German relations," Putin said. US President Joe Biden has given Ukraine permission to use American-supplied weapons to strike targets in Russia, but only near the Kharkiv region. The White House has said Ukraine cannot use long-range ATACMS missiles on Russian soil.

Ukraine has used US weapons to strike inside Russia in recent days, a US senator and a Western official told the Associated Press on Wednesday. Fierce fighting has been raging north-east of Kharkiv since a new Russian push across Ukraine's northern border. Kharkiv, Ukraine's second city, is just 30km from the border. UK Foreign Secretary Lord Cameron has said it is up to Ukraine to decide how to use British weapons and insisted it has the right to strike targets on Russian territory. *—BBC News*

Pak PM in Beijing to seek more investments

BEIJING, 6 JUNE

Visiting Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has reached Beijing for talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping and other leaders to elevate all-weather bilateral ties and prospects of more aid and investments to bail out his cash-strapped country from the current economic crisis.

Sharif, on a five-day official visit to China since 4 June, toured the southern high-tech city of Shenzhen on Wednesday and addressed the investors meeting.

During his stay here, Sharif will meet Xi, Premier Li Qiang and other leaders, Pakistan's state-run APP news agency reported. He will also attend a Pakistan-China Friendship and Business event and have meetings with the CEOs of leading Chinese companies working on the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects.

Several MoUs between the two countries on cooperation in various fields are likely to be signed, the report said.

Pakistan's economy is facing severe headwinds, and it has formally requested the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for the next bailout package between USD 6 billion and USD 8 billion with the possibility of augmentation through climate financing.

In his address to the investors meeting in Shenzhen, Sharif assured full security to the Chinese personnel from the recurring terrorist attacks targeting them. The 72-year-old leader embarked on his first visit to China after he took over as prime minister for the second term after his Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party-led coalition government assumed power in March.

Addressing the Pakistan-China Business Forum, Sharif assured all-out facilitation to Chinese investors and security of Chinese individuals, projects, and investments in Pakistan. He said his government had taken various measures to ensure fool-proof security to protect the lives of Chinese workers in Pakistan. *—PTI*

STARLINER SPACECRAFT

Sunita, Butch test manual piloting on orbit

HOUSTON, 6 JUNE

On the way to the International Space Station aboard Boeing's Starliner spacecraft, Indian-origin astronaut Sunita Williams and her colleague Butch Wilmore tested out a unique capability of the spacecraft on orbit – manual piloting.

Williams flew to space for the third time on Wednesday along with Wilmore, scripting history as the first members aboard Boeing's Starliner spacecraft on a 25-hour flight to the International Space Station (ISS).

Williams, 58, is the pilot for the flight test while Wilmore, 61, is the commander of the mission.

Although the spacecraft is usually autonomous, the crew used the hand controller to point and aim the spacecraft during about two hours of free-flight demonstrations.

Astronauts Sunita Williams and Butch Wilmore ahead of an inaugural crewed test flight of Boeing's Starliner spacecraft *PHOTO: PTI*

During a far-field demo, they pointed Starliner's nose toward the Earth so that its communications antenna on the back of the Service Module was pointed at the Tracking and Data Relay satellites. They then moved the Starliner so that its solar array pointed at the sun to show they could charge the internal batteries if ever needed, Boeing said in a statement.

There is more manual piloting to come for this "pilot's spacecraft" with Wilmore and Williams on docking day, 6 June. Starliner spacecraft, dubbed Calypso, has been developed by Boeing, under a contract from NASA. It has run into several delays and glitches in its developmental process. This mission is a critical venture for manufacturer Boeing, which has been under pressure after a series of safety incidents on its aeroplanes.

Starliner was developed in response to NASA's request for commercial options to get its astronauts into space.

The agency gave contracts to Boeing and SpaceX to help bring their capsules into service and then pay them for six operational missions. *—PTI*

Gold climbs ₹680; silver rallies ₹1,400

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

Gold prices jumped Rs 680 to Rs 73,500 per 10 grams in the local market on Thursday amid a jump in the precious metal rates internationally, according to HDFC Securities. The yellow metal had closed at Rs 72,820 per 10 grams in the previous session. Silver also rallied by Rs 1,400 to Rs 93,300 per kg against Rs 91,900 per kg in the previous session. In the global markets, spot gold at Comex was trading at USD 2,360 per ounce, up USD 28 from the previous close. Silver also trading higher at USD 30.30 per ounce. It had settled at USD 29.75 per ounce in the previous close. Gold and silver prices gained as bond yields fell after weaker-than-expected US private payrolls data bolstered expectations that the US Federal Reserve would cut interest rates later this year. "Further, downbeat US ADP non-farm employment data increased the possibility of the rate cuts which supported bullion prices." —*PTI*

Rupee falls 5 paise to 83.49 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 6 JUNE

The rupee depreciated 5 paise to settle at 83.49 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday due to foreign capital outflows and rising crude oil prices overseas. Forex traders said a weak American currency and firm trend in the equity markets supported the local currency even as investors remained concerned ahead of the RBI's monetary policy decision to be announced on Friday. The local unit opened at 83.40 and touched the intra-day low of 83.50 against the greenback during the session. The local unit finally settled at 83.49 (provisional) against the American currency, down 5 paise from its previous close. On Wednesday, the rupee settled 7 paise higher at 83.44 against the dollar. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.03 per cent. —*PTI*

Nisaba Godrej resigns from VIP Industries Board

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

Godrej Consumer's executive chairperson Nisaba Godrej has resigned as an Independent Director from the board of luggage and travel accessories maker VIP Industries. She cited differences in leadership accountability and succession planning. The resignation of Godrej group scion came on 3 June, VIP Industries said. The board of VIP Industries is led by Dilip Piramal, the Chairman of the Rs 2,250-crore company. Nisaba was reappointed to the board of VIP Industries in April 2021 and her term was ending on 31 March, 2026. She attended all five meetings held in FY23 and has voluntarily waived off receipt of sitting fees for any meetings attended by her, according to the annual report of the company. An alumnus of Wharton School and Harvard Business School, Nisaba Godrej is the director of another Godrej group firm Godrej Agrovet. Besides, she is also an independent director of Bharti Airtel, and Mahindra and Mahindra. —*PTI*

Markets up again on easing political worries

Sensex jumped 692.27 to settle at 75,074.51

MUMBAI, 6 JUNE

Stock markets rallied for the second straight day on Thursday with the benchmark Sensex jumping nearly 693 points on easing political worries as the ruling NDA set in motion its government formation efforts.

Regaining the 75,000 level, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 692.27 points or 0.93 per cent to settle at more than week high of 75,074.51. During the day, the barometer soared 915.49 points or 1.23 per cent to 75,297.73.

NSE Nifty climbed 201.05 points or 0.89 per cent to 22,821.40 with 38 of its constituents ending with gains. Intraday, it rallied 289.8 points or 1.28 per cent to 22,910.15.

Key indices Sensex and Nifty had plunged by nearly 6 per cent on Tuesday due to below-expectation results of Lok Sabha polls. Investors lost a record Rs 31 lakh crore in a single day due to market meltdown.

The indices recovered more than 3 per cent on Wednesday with NDA allies affirming their support to BJP to form the new government. In two days of gain, investor wealth has recovered by around Rs 21 lakh crore.

NSE Nifty climbed 201.05 points to 22,821.40 **PHOTO: PTI**

- Among the 30 Sensex companies, Tech Mahindra, HCL Technologies, State Bank of India, NTPC, Infosys, Larsen & Toubro, Tata Consultancy Services and Wipro emerged as the biggest gainers

However, anxiety persists over the new Cabinet being put in place and policy measures expected to be announced in the coming budget, Nair said adding that "the market is awaiting fresh signals from the RBI's comments on liquidity".

Realty, IT, and oil & gas shares led the recovery while FMCG and healthcare witnessed profit booking.

Among the 30 Sensex companies, Tech Mahindra, HCL Technologies, State Bank of India, NTPC, Infosys, Larsen & Toubro, Tata Consultancy Services and Wipro emerged as the biggest gainers.

Hindustan Unilever, Asian Paints, Mahindra & Mahindra, Nestle, IndusInd Bank and Sun Pharma were among the laggards. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PIXABAY

BHEL SHARES UP 14.5% AFTER DEAL WITH ADANI

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

Shares of BHEL on Thursday zoomed over 14.50 per cent after the company said it has secured an order worth over Rs 3,500 crore from Adani Power Limited to set up a thermal power project in Raipur, Chhattisgarh.

The stock jumped 14.57 per cent to Rs 292.45 on the BSE.

On the NSE, it climbed 14.48 per cent to Rs 292.35.

Shares of Adani Power also rallied nearly 8 per cent to Rs 782.30 on the BSE.

It has "signed contract agreement on June 5, for the supply of equipment (boiler, turbine, generator) and supervision of erection and commissioning for 2x800 MW power project based on Supercritical Technology", Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) said in an exchange filing on Wednesday.

The order's total worth is more than Rs 3,500 crore, excluding the GST, the company added. —*PTI*

AFTER REGISTRATION EXPIRY

SEBI rolls out new rules to ease FPIs' security

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

Markets regulator Sebi on Wednesday issued the framework for Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs), which will make it easier for such investors to deal with securities lying in their demat accounts after the expiry of their registration.

Under the current rule, Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) are required to have a valid registration as long as they hold securities in India. In order to keep their registration valid, they need to pay the registration fee for every block of three years. Non-payment of fees lead to FPI's registration expiring.

Further, current rules do not provide for liquidation of securities by FPI after the expiry of their registration and the securities held by such FPI remain frozen in their demat accounts.

FPI registrations that expire due to non-payment of registration fee, would now be permitted to be reactivated within 30 days from such expiry. Such FPIs would also be permitted to dispose of their securities holdings during these 30 days, according to a Sebi's circular.

PHOTO: PIXABAY

Further, in cases where the FPI chooses not to reactivate its registration within 30 days, it would be allowed 180 days for disposal of its securities. The registration fee for FPIs is currently USD 2,500 for Category I, and USD 250 for Category II.

Further, written-off securities will be transferred to an escrow account, operated by an exchange empanelled broker, who would attempt to sell the securities at the available market price until the securities are disposed-off. The proceeds from the sale will be transferred to Sebi's IPEF. —*PTI*

India offers $500B investment deals in clean energy by 2030

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

India offers huge investment opportunities worth over USD 500 billion, particularly in clean energy value chain including renewables, green hydrogen and EV, by 2030, the commerce ministry said on Thursday.

This was stated by Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal, who is in Singapore for the two-day meet of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) Clean Economy Investor Forum.

The meeting, which started on Wednesday, brought together the region's top investors, clean economy companies, and start-ups to mobilise investments into sustainable infrastructure, climate technology, and renewable energy projects. The framework is structured around four pillars relating to trade, supply chains, clean economy and fair economy. India has joined all the pillars except the trade. Further, the ministry said that the forum resulted in USD 23 billion investment opportunities for sustainable infrastructure projects in the Indo-Pacific.

The coalition estimates that its members, taken together, have over USD 25 billion in capital that can be deployed in Indo-Pacific emerging market infrastructure investments in the coming years. The fund's founding supporters include Australia, Japan, Korea, and the US, which plan to provide USD 33 million in initial grant to catalyse up to USD 3.3 billion in private investment.

The event also witnessed signing of an offtake agreement between Sembcorp Green Hydrogen India, Kyushu Electric and Sojitz for production and export of 200 KTPA green ammonia from India to Japan. —PTI

Singapore group to export green ammonia from India

SINGAPORE, 6 JUNE

Green ammonia from a 200,000-metric tonne per annum plant to be built by a Singapore group in India will be exported to Japan under an agreement signed on Thursday.

Sembcorp Green Hydrogen Pte Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Singapore's Sembcorp Industries has signed a Heads of Terms (HoT) with buyers Sojitz Corporation and Kyushu Electric Power Co Inc of Japan, paving the way to finalise a definitive green ammonia offtake agreement.

Work towards a front-end engineering design award for the project in India is underway following the completion of the feasibility study. Land for the facility in India has been secured, said Sembcorp.

As the lead developer and operator of the project, Sembcorp will utilise renewable energy to produce an initial 200,000 metric tonnes per annum of green ammonia from the Indian plant.

The HoT was presented at the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) Clean Economy Investor Forum, —*PTI*

WHAT IS GREEN AMMONIA?

Green ammonia, by contrast, relies on renewable energy, and derives its hydrogen from water and its nitrogen from air. This form of ammonia production is typically more expensive but is becoming cheaper, not least as renewable energy prices fall.

NO ALTERATIONS

Fitch Ratings assigned India a stable outlook, reflecting a positive assessment of the country's economic conditions and prospects **PHOTO: ANI**

Even with coalition govt, India's rating stable: Fitch

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

Fitch Ratings has maintained its assessment of India's Long-Term Foreign-Currency Issuer Default Rating (IDR) at 'BBB-' with a Stable Outlook, despite the coalition government following the recent election results.

The affirmation of India's rating highlights Fitch's confidence in the nation's economic resilience and potential for growth, even in the face of political fragmentation.

Traditionally, coalition governments are perceived as unstable, often leading to slower policy implementation and economic reforms.

Earlier this year, in January, Fitch Ratings assigned India a stable outlook, reflecting a positive assessment of the country's economic conditions and prospects. The recent elections, which culminated in a coalition government, have not altered Fitch's outlook.

In the past coalition governments often resulted in slower decision-making processes and policy execution, but with BJP dominating the new NDA coalition India's economic outlook remains positive. One of the key factors supporting India's rating is its strong growth outlook.

According to the Fitch Ratings, India is expected to remain one of the fastest-growing economies globally, with a projected GDP growth rate of 6.9 per cent for the fiscal year 2024.

On inflation in FY25, the report says that Reserve Bank of India may cut its policy rate by 75bp in FY25.

The report also highlights that the improved health of the banks and corporate balance sheets should pave the way for a positive investment cycle.

India's large and diverse economy, with significant contributions from various sectors including services, industry, and agriculture, provides a stable foundation for continued growth. —*PTI*

Demand for non-ferrous metals to remain at 10%

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

The demand for non-ferrous metals, including copper and aluminium, is likely to remain healthy at around 10 per cent in the current fiscal year, significantly surpassing the expected growth of 2 per cent in global demand, ratings agency Icra said on Thursday.

Moreover, the moderation in price of coal is likely to ease input cost pressures to an extent.

"On the domestic front, the demand for non-ferrous metals is expected to remain healthy at around 10 per cent in FY2025, significantly outpacing the expected growth of around 2 per cent in global demand. The rating agency said it foresees firm metal prices and benign input costs to increase the profitability of the domestic non-ferrous metal entities in FY25.

"With input costs remaining largely under check along with healthy growth in realisation, the operating margins of the domestic entities are estimated to rise. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

EV BOOM HELPS NEPAL SAVE ON OIL IMPORT, ALLEVIATE SMOG

KATHMANDU, 6 JUNE

Nepal's abundant hydroelectric power is helping the Himalayan nation cut its oil imports and clean up its air, thanks to a boom in sales of electric vehicles.

Nearly all of the electricity produced in Nepal is clean energy, most of it generated by river-fed hydroelectricity. Thanks to that abundant source of power, the country is quickly expanding charging networks and imports of EVs have doubled in each of the past two years, according to customs data.

The Nepal Electricity Authority estimates use of EVs has reduced oil import costs by USD 22 million a year, and the savings are increasing.

Access to electricity in Nepal has soared in the past three decades as hydroelectric projects were completed. Now all but 6 per cent of the population can reach the country's fast-expanding grid. That is enabling the country to leapfrog its neighbours in adopting EVs.

PHOTO: ANI

Nepal so far has the peak capacity to produce 2,600 megawatts of power and that is increasing as new hydropower plants are completed. A very small amount of power is also generated by solar plants.

Chinese automaker BYD's Atto 3 and Indian maker Tata's Nexon appear to dominate sales of electric passenger sedans. Nepal has made boosting the use of EVs part of its national commitments to curbing climate-changing emissions, pledging to raise EVs to 25 per cent of all auto sales by 2025. —*PTI*

Orchid Pharma gets DCGI nod to market antibiotic drug

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

Orchid Pharma on Thursday said it has received approval from regulator DCGI to manufacture and market an antibiotic drug for the treatment of complicated urinary tract infections. Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) has granted permission to manufacture and market the finished dosage form of Cefepime and Enmetazobactam as a dry powder injectable, the drug firm said in a statement. The formulation is indicated for the treatment of complicated urinary tract infections including acute Pyelonephritis, hospital-acquired pneumonia including ventilator-associated pneumonia (VAP), and bacteremia. —*PTI*

AMID PROLONGED HEAT SPELL

Cola, ice creams sell like hot cakes

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

Companies manufacturing cola, beverages, ice creams, and other hydrating products have witnessed a steady rise in demand in several parts of the country amid the ongoing prolonged spell of heat wave.

Beverage makers such as PepsiCo India and CocaCola said demand from in-home and out-of-home consumption have skyrocketed in the east, north, and central India.

Anticipating a surge, the companies kept inventory ready and are ensuring that the products are available for consumers across retail platforms, including e-commerce.

"With temperatures soaring across the country, consumers are looking for refreshing and hydrating beverages to beat the heat this summer," a PepsiCo India spokesperson said.

Beverage makers such as PepsiCo India and CocaCola said demand from in-home and out-of-home consumption have skyrocketed **PHOTO: ANI**

The company, which has beverage brands such as 7UP, Nimbooz, Pepsi, Slice, Mountain Dew, Gatorade, and Sting, is ensuring availability of its products during the surge.

"Further, given the surge in demand, we are ensuring that our products are available across all retail and e-commerce platforms, catering to both in-home and out-of-home demand, making it easier for everyone to stay cool and refreshed during the hottest months of the year," he said.

Coca-Cola India said as the summer season reaches its peak, the Indian beverage market has gained significant momentum.

The maker of Coke, ThumsUP, Maaza, Sprite, and Minute Maid has been witnessing consistent growth in terms of sales.

Havmor Ice Cream -- now part of South Korean confectionery company LOTTE Wellfood Co -- said it has increased production as the demand for the year has surpassed last year's. —*PTI*

Cost of veg thali up 9%, non-veg cheaper: CRISIL

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

The cost of preparing a vegetarian meal (thali) at home increased by 9 per cent in May compared to the same month the previous year, CRISIL MI&A Research observed in its monthly indicator of food plate cost report.

In contrast, the cost of preparing a typical non-vegetarian meal (thali) at home decreased by 7 per cent over the same period. Essentially, it became more expensive to make a vegetarian meal and cheaper to make a non-vegetarian meal compared to a year ago, the research highlighted.

The increase in the prices of vegetables such as tomatoes, potatoes and onion remains a major contributor to the increased cost of a vegetarian meal (thali).

PHOTO: PTI

A surge of 39 per cent, 41 per cent and 43 per cent on-year in the prices of tomato, potato and onion was recorded respectively, largely because of the low base of last fiscal.

In contrast, tomato production is expected to increase by 3.98 per cent, reaching approximately 212.38 lakh tonnes in 2023-24 compared to 204.25 lakh tonnes last year —*ANII*

T20 WORLD CUP

Ireland bank on stalwarts to fire against Canada

Ireland has often struggled to make an impression in the event

BRIDGETOWN, 6 JUNE

PHOTO: X / @T20WORLDCUP

Ireland will bank on their experienced batters Andy Balbirnie, Paul Stirling, and Harry Tector to recover from the pummeling given by India and get their T20 World Cup campaign back on track when they face a dangerous Canada here on Friday.

Ireland went down by eight wickets against India on Wednesday, while Canada will be eager to recover after a seven-wicket loss to co-hosts USA.

Playing in their eighth T20 World Cup, Ireland has often struggled to make an impression in the event despite several of their key players playing in an English county. They have made it to the 'Super 8' only once in 2009.

In skipper, Navneet Dhaliwal, Canada has a veteran top-order batter who was a part of that 2019 victory, and a lot will be riding on him. Canada will also take heart from the defeat against the USA because they had posted an imposing 194 against them and would look for an encore.

Match Starts at 8 pm

Namibia were superb in the 'Super Over' win over Oman in their T20 World Cup opener and that trial by fire would have given them the confidence to take on Scotland, who will be playing their second game here after their opener against England was rained off.

The Scots did show their capabilities against the defending T20 World Cup champions, but rain had the last laugh and both teams were forced to share points.

While Namibia would rely heavily on veterans Gerhard Erasmus, the skipper, and all-rounder David Wiese, who has been at the forefront of the country's cricketing charge.

They are carrying the experience from the two previous T20 World Cups. Additionally, Namibia also has won their last three T20Is against Scotland, something that will give them a positive frame of mind.

Match starts at 12:30 am (Friday). *—PTI*

Pant will continue at No. 3: Rathour

India will continue with wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant at No. 3 in the T20 World Cup following his gritty performance against Ireland, said batting coach Vikram Rathour, who also expressed his delight at having a fully-fit Hardik Pandya back in the fold.

Rohit hints at selection mistake after win over Ireland

NEW YORK, 6 JUNE

India captain Rohit Sharma wasn't entirely pleased with the disconcerting bounce on offer from the virgin drop-in track at the Nassau County ground that left him with a bruised right bicep. While the match against Ireland ended in a straightforward victory for the Indian team, Rohit was made to reflect on the team selection strategy for the big encounter against Pakistan on Sunday. In a chat during the post-match presentation ceremony, the India captain admitted that the selection of 4 spinners in the 15-man squad doesn't make much sense if the pitches in the T20 World Cup are going to be similar to the team had in New York.

While Rohit isn't too pleased with the conditions, considering the team selection, marquee pacerJasprit Bumrah won't mind such surfaces which are rarely available back home in India. *—PTI*

Rohit Sharma PHOTO: PTI

INDONESIA OPEN

Lakshya Sen storms into quarterfinals

JAKARTA, 6 JUNE

Lakshya Sen PHOTO: X/@SENLAKSHYA

Star Indian shuttler Lakshya Sen made a flawless effort to enter the men's singles quarterfinals of the Indonesia Open Super 1000 tournament, beating Japan's Kenta Nishimoto on Thursday.

Sen hardly batted an eyelid while securing a 21-9, 21-15 win over Nishimoto in his pre-quarterfinal match.

However, it was curtains for Teresa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand in the women's doubles.

The Indian pair went down to Japan's Mayu Matsumoto and Wakana Nagahara 21-19, 19-21, 19-21 after an intense Round-of-16 match.

Tanisha Crasto and Ashwini Ponnappa also exited the tournament, ending India's campaign in the women's doubles.

Tanisha and Ashwini were beaten by South Korea's Ha Na Baek and So-Hee Lee 21-13, 19-21, 21-13.

Later, the Indian mixed doubles pair of B Sumeeth Reddy and Sikki Reddy will face China's Siwei Zheng and Yaqiong Huang.

In the men's singles, Priyansh Rajawat will take on Kunlavut Vitidsarn of Thailand, the reigning world champion and the gold medallist in last year's World Championships. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Babar under pressure: Pak ex skipper Latif

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

Babar Azam has a long way to go before becoming a captain who can handle pressure, said former Pakistan skipper Rashid Latif, declaring that India would be favorites against his country owing to a more balanced squad when the two sides clash in the T20 World Cup on Sunday. The India-Pakistan showdown, to be held in New York, is one of the most eagerly-awaited games of the ongoing tournament being co-hosted by the USA and the West Indies. "...the focus is on the game on 9 June against India. Babar (Pakistan captain) will be under a lot of pressure because of the game against India rather than performing in the World Cup," the 55-year-old former wicket-keeper-batter told PTI videos in an exclusive interview. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

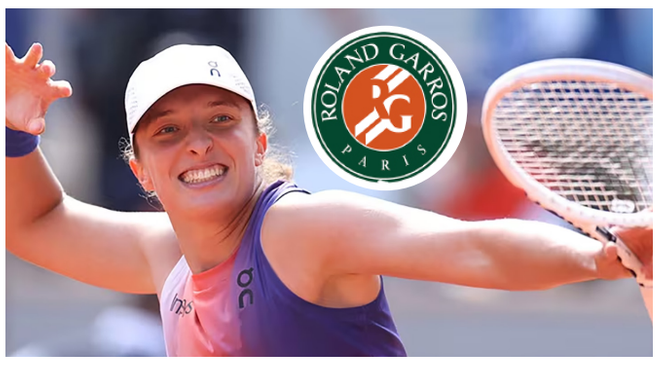
Pragg takes on Caruana in the penultimate round

STAVANGER, 6 JUNE

Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa will take on Fabiano Caruana of the United States in the ninth and penultimate round of the Norway chess tournament now underway here. It's been an event of ups and downs for the Indian super-talent as he won two games under Classical and two matches under Armageddon to reach the third spot with just two rounds to come. The highlight has been his two victories in Classical over world No. 1 Magnus Carlsen of Norway and No. 2 Caruana earlier in the tournament and the downside has been three losses under Armageddon. Carlsen, on 14.5 points, leads the fray with three victories in the Classical and he is followed by American Hikaru Nakamura who is a full point behind. Praggnanandhaa, on 12 points, is third in the standings ahead of Firouzja Alireza of France who has 11 points. Caruana, on nine points, is the next in the standings ahead of World champion Ding Liren of China, who seems poised to finish last. While it looks like a direct contest between Carlsen and Nakamura for the top spot. *—PTI*

Iga enters 3rd straight French Open

PARIS, 6 JUNE



Iga Swiatek PHOTO: X/@ROLANDGARROS

Iga Swiatek eliminated Coco Gauff 6-2, 6-4 in the French Open semifinals Thursday and stretched her winning streak at Roland Garros to 20 matches. The top-ranked Swiatek will aim at her fourth championship in five years in Paris and can become the first woman with three in a row here since Justine Henin from 2007-09.

Swiatek improved to 11-1 overall against No. 3 seed Gauff, the reigning U.S. Open champion, and has defeated her at the clay-court Grand Slam tournament three years in a row, including in the 2022 final and last year's quarterfinals. In Saturday's title match, Swiatek will face either unseeded 17-year-old Mirra Andreeva of Russia or No. 12 Jasmine Paolini of Italy.

Swiatek, who turned 23 last week, is 4-0 in major finals so far and she has been at her dominant best for most of the past two weeks.

Putting aside a three-set, second-round victory over four-time major champion Naomi Osaka, when she was forced to save a match point, Swiatek has ceded a total of merely 17 games in her other five matches. *—AP*

FIFA WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

CHEHETRI'S LAST DANCE WITNESSES A GOALLESS DRAW

KOLKATA, 6 JUNE

Sunil Chhetri PHOTO: X/@CHETRI_SUNIL11

India's hopes for the FIFA World Cup 2026 qualification took a big blow after a goalless draw against Kuwait in Kolkata on Thursday, 6 June. The Blue Tigers failed to impress in captain Sunil Chhetri's last international match and also bottled their position in the FIFA World Cup Qualifiers.

With just five points in five games, India faces Asian giants Qatar away in their last game without their best footballer. India has to climb a mountain against Qatar as a draw will not be enough to get through to the third round.

Both Kuwait and Afghanistan also remain in contention and face each other in their last game of the second round group stage. Meanwhile, India handed a debut to young left-back Jay Gupta and made five changes to their starting eleven. India surprisingly left out striker Manvir Singh, who recorded the match-winning goal against Kuwait in November last year and started with Liston Colaco and Lalrinzuala Chhangte behind Chhetri. Kuwait started well with an early golden chance and maintained the possession for the majority of the first half. *—PTI*

Bopanna-Ebden pair exits in French Open

PARIS, 6 JUNE

Rohan Bopanna and Matthew Ebden PHOTO: PTI

India's Rohan Bopanna and his Australian partner Matthew Ebden crashed out of the French Open after going down to Italian pair Simone Bolelli and Andrea Vavassori in the semifinals here on Thursday.

The second-seeded Indo-Australian pair lost 5-7, 6-2, 2-6 to the eleventh-seeded Italians.

The Australian Open winning pair overcame the challenge posed by Brazilians Marcelo Zormann and Orlando Luz 7-5, 4-6, 6-4 in the opening round.

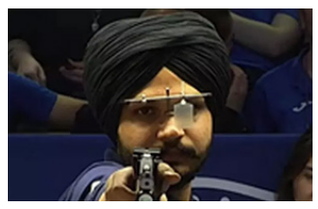
They followed that triumph with a win over the Indo-Italian pair of N Sriram Balaji and Miguel Ángel Reyes-Varela 6-7 [2-7], 6-3, 7-6 [10-8]) in the following round.

In the quarterfinals, Bopanna and his partner got the better of the Belgian duo of Sander Gillé and Joran Vliegen 7-6 [7-3], 5-7, 6-1.

Besides winning the Grand Slam doubles at Melbourne, Bopanna and Ebden had also emerged winners in the Miami Masters earlier this year. *—PTI*

ISSF World Cup: Sarabjot opens India's account in Munich with gold medal

MUNICH, 6 JUNE



Sarabjot Singh PHOTO: PTI

Sarabjot Singh opened India's account at the ongoing International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup Rifle/Pistol in Munich (Germany), with a gold medal in the men's 10m Air Pistol event.

The 22-year-old Indian shot 242.7 in the eight-man final, leaving behind his nearest competitor Bu Shuaihang of China, by 0.2 points. Germany's Robin Walter won bronze.

Sarabjot had earlier on Wednesday shot a top score of 588 to qualify for the decider. The final had in its line-up among others, the reigning Chinese World Champion Bowen Zhang and four-time Olympian Yusuf Dikec of Turkey, besides Bu and Robin.

The 22-year-old Indian shooter under the circumstances delivered a credible pillar-to-post victory for his second individual ISSF World Cup medal, after his breakthrough gold last year in Bhopal.

The young Indian was strongest off the blocks, shooting three high 10s off his first five single shots to take an early lead. His consistent shooting continued and he never gave up the lead until Walter caught up with him at the end of the 14th single shot.

A clutch 10.8 for his 15th looked to have settled the final as Walter wilted with an 8.6. After Zhang bowed out in fifth, Walter upset four-time Olympian Yusuf Dikec of Turkey for bronze.

Going into the final two shots, 1.4 points separated Sarabjot from Bu, who was now enjoying the chase as pressure told on Sarabjot. *—PTI*

Wrestler Sehrawat enters final

BUDAPEST, 6 JUNE

Indian wrestler Aman Sehrawat entered the final of the 57kg freestyle category with a 14-4 technical superiority win over over Russian-Belarusian Aryan Tsiutryn in the Budapest Ranking Series here on Thursday.

Aman, the only Indian male wrestler to qualify for the Paris Olympics, will next face world championships silver medalist Rei Higuchi of Japan for the gold medal.

This tournament will help Aman to improve upon his ranking and get a better draw at the Paris Olympics.

The final will be held later in the evening.

The Budapest ranking series is also known as the Polyak Imre & Varga Janos Memorial tournament. *—PTI*

PREMIER LEAGUE

Manchester City taking legal action

MANCHESTER, 6 JUNE

PHOTO: X / @MANCITY

Manchester City's reported legal action against the Premier League can potentially change the face of English soccer.

At a time when the most popular league in the world is trying to clamp down on out-of-control spending, the removal of its Associated Party Transaction (APT) rules could pave the way for never-before-seen excess and, it's feared, ultimately kill competition.

City is already England's most dominant team of recent times, having won six of the last seven leagues and an unprecedented four in a row.

Backed by the ruling family of Abu Dhabi, it is one of the richest clubs in the world and has spent exorbitantly on star players like Erling Haaland and Kevin De Bruyne. If restrictions over its spending powers were relaxed, City's dominance is only likely to grow, with fewer rivals able to compete.

The league introduced APT rules in December 2021 after Newcastle was bought by Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund.

The rules dictate that commercial deals with organizations linked to a club's ownership represent "fair market value."

Regulations prevent clubs from artificially inflating deals to gain an "unfair advantage over domestic competitors."

One of City's main sponsors is Abu Dhabi-based Etihad Airways. Saudi-backed Newcastle is sponsored by Saudi firm Sela, which is owned by the PIF.

It is reported that the City claims it is the victim of "discrimination."

An arbitration hearing is reportedly due to start on Monday and will last for two weeks.

If APT rules are proven to be unlawful and scrapped, there is the potential for sponsorship deals to be vastly inflated going forward without regulation from the league.

The concern is the possibility that clubs could take advantage of commercial deals with companies linked to their owners and, if abused, that could artificially distort revenues.

That would be a problem for the league's profit and sustainability regulations (PSR), which are designed to control spending about revenues and currently allow clubs to make losses of up to 105 million pounds ($133 million) over three years.

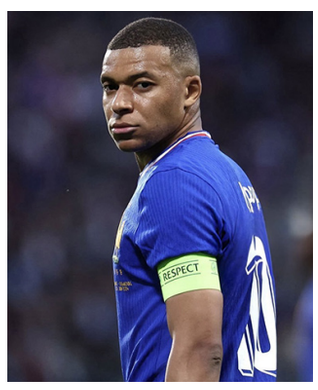
In its most extreme case, without regulation, a club could hypothetically set the value of sponsorships at any figure that would allow it to meet PSR requirements.

The city has been accused by the league of more than 100 alleged rule breaches including financial wrongdoing. If upheld, it could face a fine, points deductions, or even expulsion from the league. The city denies the charges.

City was banned from European competition by the governing body UEFA in 2020 for breaching its Financial Fair Play rules. *—AP*

PSG is banking on a new direction

MANCHESTER, 6 JUNE



Kylian Mbappe PHOTO: X / @K.MBAPPE

Kylian Mbappe. Lionel Messi. Neymar. The talent drain at Paris Saint-Germain over the past 12 months was unprecedented in the world of soccer.

Now the French club is looking to the future and an end to its age of excess.

"It is a new era of PSG," president Nasser Al-Khelaifi said. "All respect to Messi, Neymar, Kylian. We know what they've done for the club.

"It was very important to have them all. I wish them all the best for their new challenges, but as a club, for sure, I think the star is the collective."

Time will tell how PSG's post-Galactico era will work out. But the signings of Messi, Neymar, and Mbappe ultimately failed to achieve the Qatar-backed club's overriding ambition of conquering Europe.

For all of PSG's dominance of the French league — winning it in 10 of the last 12 seasons — it has reached just one Champions League final since being bought by Qatar Sports Investments in 2011.

A procession of icons has gone through the club in that time from David Beckham to Zlatan Ibrahimovic, Angel di Maria, and Sergio Ramos. Yet the Champions League has so far remained out of reach.

Even Messi couldn't change PSG's fortunes, despite ending his search for the World Cup title in 2022 in his final year in Paris. *—AP*